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**THE SCOTTISH TERTIARY EDUCATION
ADVISORY COUNCIL:
A CASE STUDY IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY-MAKING**

GORDON KIRK

Author no. M 7059265

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ADVISORY COUNCIL:
A CASE STUDY IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY-MAKING**

**GORDON KIRK
MA (University of Glasgow)
MEd (University of Glasgow)**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for
The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Centre for Educational Policy and Management
The School of Education, The Open University**

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THE SCOTTISH TERTIARY EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL: A CASE STUDY IN EDUCATIONAL POLICY-MAKING

Gordon Kirk

PhD THESIS: ABSTRACT

The study has two central purposes: firstly, to undertake the first comprehensive analysis of a particular policy-making process, the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council's work in the mid '80s on the future strategy of higher education in Scotland; and, secondly, to use the STEAC process as a case study to test the validity of three models of the policy-making process.

Using the minutes and papers of the STEAC itself, the Scottish Office file on STEAC, institutional archive materials, contemporary press coverage, and official documents, the study examines the STEAC process from its inception to its culmination in ministerial decisions. It establishes the educational and political matrix from which the STEAC sprang, and it analyses the evidence submitted, the transactions of the Council itself, the public and professional reaction to the Council's recommendations, the government's subsequent legislative action, and its aftermath. Through that analytical sequence, the interplay of forces and the key determinants of policy are identified and an assessment made of the strategic significance of STEAC in the development of higher education in Scotland.

The STEAC process, given its transparency and the fullness of its evidential base, is taken to be an appropriate context against which to test the validity of three models of the policy-making process: the policy community, incrementalism, and the Humes "revised model". It is concluded that the established notion of a homogeneous policy community, as an elitist alliance in collusion with government, is suspect; that incrementalism should give way to an alternative model for which the term "prudentialism" is proposed; and that, while the Humes model acknowledges the full complexity of social phenomena, its very diffuseness makes it insufficient by itself as a model for interpreting the policy-making process in education.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABRC	Advisory Board for the Research Councils
ADES	Association of Directors of Education in Scotland
ALCES	Association of Lecturers in Colleges of Education in Scotland
ALSCI	Association of Lecturers in Scottish Central Institutions
AUT	Association of University Teachers
CAG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CCC	Consultative Committee on the Curriculum
CDP	Committee of Directors of Polytechnics
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
COPADOI	Committee of Principals and Directors of Central Institutions
COSLA	Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
CVCP	Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
DCPE	Dunfermline College of Physical Education
DES	Department of Education and Science
EIS	Educational Institute of Scotland
GTC	General Teaching Council for Scotland
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspectorate
NAB	National Advisory Body
NAS/UWT	National Association of School Teachers/Union of Women Teachers
NUS	National Union of Students
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PCFC	Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council
PESTS	Principals of East of Scotland Tertiary Sector
RGIT	Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology
SCE	Scottish Certificate of Education

SCOVACT	Scottish Council for the Validation of Courses for Teachers
SCRE	Scottish Council for Research in Education
SCSU	Standing Committee of Scottish Universities
SED	Scottish Education Department
SHEFC	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council
SIT	Scottish Institute of Technology
SSPE	Scottish School of Physical Education
SSTA	Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association
STUC	Scottish Trades Union Congress
UFC	Universities Funding Council
UGC	University Grants Committee
WAB	Welsh Advisory Body

CHAPTER 1: RATIONALE AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The various forms of enquiry into the social condition, all of them rooted in the impulse to understand, issue in two basic kinds of achievement. Firstly, when they involve the analysis of an aspect of the social world that has hitherto remained unexamined they bring it within the scope of what is known, distilling and systematising the myriad transactions of social and institutional experience into a thesis that contributes to the enlargement of the social database. Secondly, these forms of enquiry entail a reappraisal of what is known and established and, by adducing new evidence or applying a novel perspective, either confirm the standard explanation or offer a revised interpretation. In the former case, territory on the map of knowledge that was previously unexplored is charted. In the latter, some of the lines on the map are more securely delineated or perhaps are redrawn. The traveller is indebted to both types of exploration.

The present study seeks to meet these twin desiderata. Focusing on the work of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council (STEAC) (1) on future strategy for higher education in Scotland in the mid-1980s, it undertakes, for the first time, a detailed analysis of this major piece of policy-making, tracing the process from the social and educational matrix from which the STEAC sprang to the final ministerial decision on its recommendations, and its aftermath. It then uses the STEAC process as a case study to test the validity of some widely accepted models of educational policy-making.

STEAC as a Field of Enquiry

While the pursuit of knowledge and understanding and the search for explanation in any domain are intrinsically valuable, any particular investigation stands in need of further justification. Five arguments are adduced in response to that obligation.

Firstly, no exhaustive study of the STEAC report has previously been undertaken. It is true that at the time of its publication the STEAC report was the focus of widespread discussion in the public and the educational press; it is also the case that several commentaries have been published - by Humes (2), by McPherson and Raab (3), by Kirk (4 and 5), by Williams (6), by Bell (7), by Walker (8) and by Scott (9). In addition, brief mention has been made of STEAC, or its impact, in recent works on politics and public policy in Scotland by Midwinter, Keating and Mitchell (10), and Brown, McCrone and Paterson (11).

Where these studies have been in any way extended, they have concentrated on the report's recommendations and have sought to offer a critical evaluation of the report's impact. Besides, most of them undertook the analysis almost immediately following the publication of the report. Such studies are clearly valuable and, in the expectation that a more considered interpretation of the report's impact will be possible after the passage of ten years, the present investigation will also focus on the outcomes of the report. However, no previous study has focused on the policy-making process of STEAC, beginning with its immediate context and the factors that gave it birth, the appointment of the Council, the evidence it received, the dynamics of the interactions on the Council itself, its recommendations, the public and professional reaction, the huge political controversy it generated, its culmination in the ministerial decision before parliament, and its impact on higher education provision in Scotland. The present study, which is concerned as much with the process as the product, as well as with the social, political and educational matrix from which it sprang, therefore offers the first comprehensive analysis of that kind.

Secondly, the STEAC report represented the first official attempt to repair a fractured system of higher education. At the time of STEAC's creation, not only

was higher education provided by four separately administered and designated types of institution - universities, central institutions, colleges of education, and further education colleges - but three of these were the responsibility of one cabinet minister, while the universities were the responsibility of another. The incoherence of higher education in Scotland had long been recognised. For example, fifteen years before STEAC was established, the University of Edinburgh sponsored a conference on government and nationalism in Scotland, and "home rule" for the Scottish universities was debated. In a remarkable rehearsal of the STEAC debate, Bell was critical of "the present rag-bag of formal and informal relationships between London, Edinburgh, the universities and the colleges, and argued for "some single committee and some single body of officials to co-ordinate their efforts and relate their plans both to the other educational sectors and to the needs of Scottish society". (12) In an immediate rejoinder, Walsh issued the kind of warning that was to be repeated fifteen years later, during the work of STEAC:

"I would therefore argue that to detach the Scottish universities from the general United Kingdom system can only conduce to their decline, and the universities would become comparable, not to the great academies of Europe and America but, rather, to the inward-looking institutions of the Republic of Ireland." (13)

Walsh's view was to prevail throughout the seventies and, in the proposals for legislative devolution in 1979, the Scottish universities were able to defend their position as members of a British community of scholarship under the political control of the DES in London.

When, in 1984, the terms of reference of the STEAC were extended specifically to include the universities, it became possible for the first time to mount a public and national debate on the integrity of higher education in Scotland and the place of the

universities within it. STEAC therefore provided a unique opportunity. The ministerial response to that opportunity, announced in parliament in 1987, has been described as "a timid retreat". (14) However, within five years of that decision, the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act of 1992 repatriated the Scottish universities and created a unified system under the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC). STEAC's part in that major transformation of higher education needs to be established.

Thirdly, the STEAC review, committed by its terms of reference to consider "the general principles which would govern relationships between universities and other institutions" (15), was obliged to address a matter of perennial concern in Scottish education, the institutional context of teacher education. The terms of the minute of 30th January 1905, which provided for the establishment of provincial committees for the training of teachers, made it clear that the intention was "to ensure that that training shall be brought into as close connection with the university organisations as the attainments of the students upon entering admit of". (16) However, as Stocks (17) has shown, Craik, the Secretary of the Department, had no confidence in the universities as teacher educators. His successor as Secretary, John Struthers, was even more dismissive. It was he who referred to "professors as a body, welled up in their impenetrable fortress of academic seclusion" and ventured the opinion that, if what was needed was a broader conception of education for teachers "the university is the last agency in the world through which we are likely to obtain it". (18) Accordingly, the Departmental strategy was to insist upon and to secure a differentiation of functions - with universities committed to promoting general education, whilst professional education was the responsibility of specialist training institutions. According to Bell, throughout the century there was "a sustained and deliberate policy on the part of a highly centralised government department, the Scottish Education Department (SED), to keep the control of professional teacher training, as opposed to general teacher education, out of the universities' too

independent hands". (19) And Bell's further study of the university departments of education provides a vivid analysis of some of the conflicts which attended that policy. (20)

STEAC was the fourth major review since the war to permit the reconsideration of the policy of separating teacher education from the universities. The first of these, the report of the Advisory Council on the Training of Teachers, which was established towards the end of the war, devoted a section to the question: "Should the training of teachers be taken over by the universities?" (21) The case rested on claims relating to up-grading the status of teachers, enhancing recruitment, and realising the ideal of an all-graduate profession. The Council was either "not convinced of the soundness of these claims" or maintained that they could be met by the changes they proposed, notwithstanding a note of reservation by the two members of the Council who were members of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS). The Council recommended the establishment of self-governing institutes of education, which would undertake the teacher training role but would, in addition, become major centres of research and professional development, led by staff of professorial standing and with their own "graduation ceremonies", and empowered, when they reached their full maturity, to give degrees and even to take over the work of the university departments of education. While the thinking of the Advisory Council on the principles of teacher education still has validity, the organisational change that was proposed was not made the focus of any specific programme of action. Nevertheless, by the time of STEAC, two of Scotland's largest teacher education institutions in Glasgow and Edinburgh were not far short of the institutional ideal envisaged by the Advisory Council. Furthermore, they retained their institutional autonomy.

The second major post-war review was occasioned by the Robbins Report of 1963. In its evidence to the Robbins Committee, the SED wrote, with reference to the relationship between institutions of higher education in Scotland,

"There is no doubt that this is the major problem of higher education in Scotland. Decisions cannot much longer be postponed on the respective spheres of universities, central institutions, and colleges of education, their relationship with one another, and the nature of the awards to which the courses each kind of institution provides should lead." (22)

In oral evidence, the question of degrees for teachers and links with universities was raised repeatedly, with strong support for a special education degree for some of the best students in the colleges of education. There were also strong criticisms made of the PGCE course and the possibility was mooted - by Walker of Aberdeen and Adams of St Andrews - that it should be taken over by the universities. Robbins recommended the introduction of the BEd degree and also the transfer of the PGCE to the universities. The first of these recommendations was implemented and marked a significant development in co-operation between the colleges and the universities. However, the independent standing of the colleges was maintained.

The third review was undertaken by the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Education and Science. (23) That committee was concerned with teacher training in England and Wales but visited Scotland and took evidence from a large number of bodies, including students. While there was a great deal of critical comment by students on the "atmosphere" of the colleges, the discussion again turned to the relationship between colleges and universities. In the session which Wood, Principal of Jordanhill, had with the Select Committee on his own, he referred to the possibility of a degree for primary teachers, physical education

teachers and others "independent of the university". He added, "that is my own personal view, but I am not a Scot". (24) When pressed on the question of the colleges' independence he replied,

"It does not have to be independent. It might well become part of the University of the City of Glasgow, with the Art School, the Music School, the College of Domestic Science, etc, but what I would say is that I am not opposed to university control of teacher training at all, provided it will take in the whole of teacher training and not just the best students or the ones that the university would like."

In his evidence, James Scotland, Principal of Aberdeen, made a similar point about the linking of that college with Aberdeen University and Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology. However, before the Select Committee could report, a general election took place and the work of the committee was shelved. For all that, it provides an authentic view about attitudes to teacher education and its institutional context at the time.

All three of these post-war studies left teacher education in Scotland still autonomous and independent of the universities so that the colleges of education had a virtual monopoly of that work. One explanation for that outcome is that for these enquiries the institutional context or the relationship between colleges of education and the universities was not the most pressing matter. For the first and third of them the content of teacher education was the over-riding consideration. In the case of Robbins, the committee was charged with the enormous task of reviewing the whole of higher education and had enough good sense to respect the separate educational arrangements north of the border. STEAC was established with terms of reference that gave much higher priority to the relationship between

higher education institutions and might reasonably be expected to give closer attention to the complex question of how teacher education should be more closely integrated into the pattern of higher education in Scotland. In that sense, STEAC provided the opportunity to test the strength of one feature of the Scottish educational tradition - its separate teacher education system.

The fourth factor that may be invoked to justify STEAC as a field of enquiry concerns the standing of the colleges of education. STEAC was established at a time of acute uncertainty in these colleges. Student number projections pointed to a still further significant retrenchment after nearly a decade of decline. The STEAC report became the primary agent in the further reduction in the size of the college sector and, for that reason, was the source of great bitterness and acrimony. There is a need for a dispassionate analysis of the factors which influenced the further decline of the sector following Marker's analysis up to 1981. (25) The present study also makes a contribution to the growing corpus of historical analyses of the college of education sector. Apart from Marker's general study of teacher education in Scotland, volumes have been produced for St Andrew's (26), Moray House (27), Jordanhill (28) and Dunfermline College (29). These, in their different ways, will provide a basis for the next major history of teacher education in Scotland to replace Cruickshank's volume which, published in 1970, is now well out of date. (30)

Finally, the STEAC initiated the most wide-ranging debate on higher education Scotland has ever witnessed. The volume of critical writing in the submission of evidence, in the formal consultation period which followed the report's publication - not to mention the extensive lobbying by individuals and institutions - was wholly unprecedented. It generated not only vigorous academic discussion but fierce political exchanges. STEAC was, in brief, extremely controversial. For some, it appeared to usher in the millennium; it meant "Good news from

Scotland" (31); while, for others, it led only to "a timid retreat" by the minister. (32) Some saw it as a major opportunity for radical change; for others, it was weak and conservative, papering over the cracks of the educational edifice. Many of these judgements were uttered in the heat of the controversy. Ten years on, there is an opportunity for a more measured assessment.

STEAC and the Educational Policy-making Process

Focusing as it does on the interplay of personalities, pressure groups and other influences on government action, this study reflects the view of policy-making as a process. Hogwood (33) implies by his choice of sub-title - "Shaping public policy in Britain" - that policy does not suddenly emerge in final form but is the outcome of a process in which a proposal is progressively formulated over a period in response to various pressures. He writes,

"Policy-making is a process which develops over time from the raising of the issue, discussion of it, and subsequent government action or inaction. The process approach emphasises that policy can be shaped at all stages of the policy process." (34)

In line with that view, partly in response to the "democratic deficit" and partly as evidence of the growth of devolutionary sentiment, there has developed in Scotland a considerable interest in policy-making, particularly in the educational field, and a range of theoretical perspectives on the policy-making process has been generated. The present study, which involves a detailed charting of the policy process from the original perception of a difficulty to the final articulation of government policy, provides an appropriate and demanding context in which to test the validity of some of these theoretical formulations. Arguably, indeed, given the openness of the STEAC process and the explicitness of its evidential base, a more demanding test

would be difficult to envisage. Accordingly, three theoretical frameworks will be examined in relation to the STEAC process.

The first analysis will involve a family of three related theoretical perspectives. The first of these is the "leadership class" as developed by Humes (35) in his polemical *The Leadership Class in Scottish Education*. Membership of this class is identified "quite precisely" as "career civil servants of assistant secretary level or above within the SED; members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate; at local level, directors of education and their staff; principals of colleges of education; and, not least, the leading office bearers in a range of important educational bodies". (36) According to Humes, "these are the people who, collectively, set a large part of the agenda of Scottish education and contribute significantly to the formulation and implementation of policy". (37) Operating within an already highly centralised system "these people meet frequently and reinforce each other's value system". While they may outwardly be committed to public service, they are, in fact, engaged in activities "of a highly self-centred character". (38) In effect, according to Humes, an exclusively closed system of policy-making has been established in which consultation is "stage-managed" and, by the careful choice of people for service on public bodies who show the required degree of "deference and trust", the outcome of policy discussion is carefully controlled. In short, the leadership class is characterised famously as being marked by "professional protectionism, bureaucratic expansionism, and ideological self-deception". (39)

The notion of the "leadership class" is closely related to that of the "policy community" as elaborated by McPherson and Raab in their fascinating study of educational policy from 1945. Adopting a more neutral approach than Humes, McPherson and Raab acknowledged the necessity for consultation in effective policy-making in line with the work of Jordan and Richardson (40) and of Hogwood (41). They recognise that the relationship between government and

interest groups is a two-way process: interest groups seek advance information about proposed policy changes; they have an entitlement to consultation on matters that affect them or on policies which they will be expected to implement; and they welcome the opportunity to influence policy itself. For its part, government is dependent on interest groups for their specialist knowledge, and will expect to influence group leaders so as to increase support for any policy change and with regard to its implementation. In all of these ways, governments and interest groups are interdependent.

However, through a series of interviews with key players in educational policy-making over the period from 1945, McPherson and Raab depict an extremely close-knit policy community. For them, the term denotes "a set of persons and groups which stretches across the divide between government and outside interests and which is directly involved in the making and implementation of policy. (42) They maintain that "the policy community was the community of individuals who mattered". (43) What is striking in their analysis is the cohesiveness of the group: members of the policy community shared the same educational background of the "Kirriemuir career" (44) and they "share the same assumptive worlds". They contend that, contrary to the notion of the open society and of democratic decision-making, "the making of Scottish educational policy has seen a striking continuity of relationships among a small group of educationists and officials". (45) They continue: "For a long period, the initiative in policy-making lay mainly within the policy community of officials and educationists that linked government with society and from which ministers and politicians were for the most part excluded. The assumptions shared by those who were administratively or professionally concerned with education enabled them to resist or mould political inputs." (46)

Marker, (47) acknowledging that he is "deeply indebted to their (that is McPherson and Raab's) work, both as a source of information and of ideas" (48) and following their methodology of interviewing leading figures in teacher education, concluded that the policy community was, indeed, influential. He doubted, however, whether, as McPherson and Raab appeared to be implying, there was a single policy community for Scottish education. His study suggested that the policy community had become "factorised" and he claimed to identify a specific policy community for teacher education. What is more, Marker claimed that membership of the community was uneven: at the centre lay the SED; close to them were "core groups"; then, somewhat more distant from the centre, were "peripheral groups"; and, finally, there were "external pressure groups", with correspondingly less influence. (49) Significantly, Marker's title - "The Spider's Web?" - implies that policy-making is carefully controlled by a scheming SED and there is no doubt that some of the observations he gleaned from his interviewees strongly confirm that impression of policy-making as a highly conspiratorial undertaking involving the systematic manipulation of groups and individuals.

While there are variations in the perspectives developed by Humes, McPherson and Raab, and Marker, there are sufficiently strong similarities to justify analysing these together. The notion of policy being heavily influenced by a small group such as the policy community has turned out to be an extremely robust theoretical construct. For instance, in a recent study, Humes sees the re-emergence of the leadership class having survived the impact of the busy and aggressive Minister for Education, Michael Forsyth. (50) In addition, current studies of Scottish political life - for example, those by Paterson (51) and by Brown, McCrone and Paterson (52) - take the notion of the policy community as an accepted explanation of policy-making in Scotland. However, the three studies that have been mentioned relate to developments in Scotland up to the early '80s and precede the work of the STEAC. That body of work nonetheless poses a number of questions about the

policy-making process that require further analysis: these concern the homogeneity and cohesiveness of the policy community; the impact of the policy community on policy formulation in relation to other agencies; the extent of collusion between the policy community and government; and the extent to which members of the policy community can be fairly characterised as being concerned with the pursuit and protection of self-interest.

A related theoretical issue involves the debate between "pluralist" and "corporatist" models of policy-making. The literature here is bespattered with claims and counter-claims on whether policy-making is most accurately described as pluralist or corporatist. The search for clarity is not helped by the fact that, as Hogwood avers, there are almost as many definitions of these terms as there are writers using them. (53) McPherson and Raab demonstrate definitional clarity: they maintain that the distinction between pluralism and corporatism turns largely on the degree of conflict or consensus in the relations between groups and government. In broad terms, they maintain, "pluralism holds that a dispersed array of groups presses demands on government, whilst corporatism holds that selected groups collaborate with government in formulating and implementing policy." That is, in the former case, power is shared between different and at times competing bodies, with the government cast in the role of arbiter; in the latter, the government shows a preference for certain groups which collude in the process of policy-making. The definitional clarity shown by McPherson and Raab is not matched by the inconclusiveness of their findings. Their analysis leads them to conclude: "The evidence we have presented on Scottish educational policy-making testifies to characteristics found both in pluralism and corporatism. But our reservations about the extent of pluralism in the system do not lead us to unequivocally corporatist conclusions". (54) Marker is equally ambivalent, concluding from his study that "if the system were, in one sense, pluralist, it was a managed and limited form of pluralism which shades into corporatism". Indeed, he doubts whether "such efforts

at categorisation add to our understanding of a dynamic process". (55) The validity of that conclusion needs to be tested.

The second major perspective to be examined concerns the extent to which policy-making is a rational enterprise conducted on a systematic basis or one in which only modest adjustments to the status quo are ever possible. The rationalist model as described by Richardson and Jordan (56) involves clarification of goals and purposes, the identification of all the possible strategies for achieving these goals, the dispassionate analysis of alternative lines of action and their consequences and the implementation of the most appropriate strategy. The sloppiness of much policy-making, according to rationalists, is to be explained by the failure to address problems in that systematic way. For their part, incrementalists dismiss the rationalist standpoint as a council of perfection, "the planner's dream". (57) They maintain that the model exalts rationality and fails to acknowledge "our inability to achieve a synoptic intellectual mastery of complex social problems". (58) Worse still, the rationalist view is thought to disregard the political context of planning, with the inevitable constraints that imposes. The incrementalist position by contrast is attuned to these political realities. It recognises that policy-making is bound to entail negotiation between groups and the capacity to adjust to the outcomes of the political process. Since "neither revolution, nor drastic policy change, nor even carefully planned big steps are ordinarily possible", (59) policy-makers do best to proceed slowly, from one compromise to the next, making incremental adjustments to the status quo. It is for this reason that Lindblom prefers the term "muddling through". In this approach, policy-making tends to involve "small scale extensions of past efforts with an expectation that there will be a constant return to the problem to make further extensions and to reconsider the problem in the light of new data, etc. In other words, successive limited comparisons." (60) Incrementalism, in turn, attracts its critics: it is claimed to be costly because of its failure to research alternatives

systematically; to be unjust by placing the political acceptability of a policy on a higher plain than its moral or social value; and to pander to conservatism by serving "as an ideological reinforcement of the pro-inertia and anti-innovation forces prevalent in all human organisations, administration and policy-making". (61)

We are faced here, as in the debate between corporatism and pluralism, with the difficulty that the protagonists of each view claim to offer a descriptive as well as a normative analysis: they each claim to provide a satisfactory account of policy-making as well as to prescribe how policy-making ought to be conducted. The STEAC process provides a context in which to test these conflicting claims.

The final perspective to be considered is the "revised model" of the policy process proposed by Humes. (62) Following an evaluation of the approaches to policy-making adopted by himself in *The Leadership Class* and by McPherson and Raab in *Governing Education*, Humes has proposed "a more comprehensive way of examining the policy process in the light of recent developments". He suggests that the process might be seen in terms of five dimensions: ideology, people, structures (institutions), issues, culture. The policy process is to be viewed "as a complex interaction of these five dimensions". (63) The advantage claimed for the revised model is that it can explain changing patterns in the policy process and can give a fuller account of the forces at work. The STEAC process again provides an appropriate context in which to test the validity of that revised model.

It is recognised, of course, that the three models chosen for analysis cannot be said to represent the full range of models of the policy-making process. However, it would be an extremely superficial study which sought to test the validity of too many of the competing analyses that are currently acknowledged in the literature. It was essential to restrict the range of models examined to allow a sufficiently

detailed analysis of those selected to be undertaken, bearing in mind the limitations that are imposed on the scope of a study of this kind. As it is, the study involves a rather wider analysis than is implied by a concentration on three different theoretical perspectives. Thus, the first of them - the policy community - involves a discussion of three variants of that perspective, as well as permitting an examination of corporatism and pluralism. When that is combined with the analysis of incrementalism and rationalism, and, finally, the "revised model" proposed by Humes, it is permissible to claim that the study explores a reasonably wide range of theoretical perspectives on policy-making.

However, even if it is granted that the number of models chosen for analysis must inevitably be restricted, there is an obligation to adduce grounds for selecting the models that do feature in the study. In the first place, the policy community and its variants were selected for analysis because they have featured in recent studies of educational policy-making in Scotland. The primary impulse behind the present investigation was a degree of puzzlement at the direction of the theoretical discussion of the policy-making process in Scotland. It was essential, given the critical acclaim that has greeted the work of McPherson and Raab and also of Humes, to subject that approach to detailed scrutiny. Secondly, the debate between incrementalists and rationalists is a fascinating one, not least because the protagonists frequently confuse descriptive and normative approaches. The writer's involvement in the policy-making process of Scottish education suggested that that process was clearly characterised by incrementalism. At the same time, that theoretical formulation did not appear to offer a full account of the process. It was decided to use the STEAC case study as a means of establishing a more valid account of the policy-making process than incrementalism appeared to offer. Finally, it was significant that, as has been noted above, the progenitor of the "leadership class" model appeared to be recanting to the extent of offering a "revised" model that was judged to possess higher explanatory power. No study

had been undertaken of the validity of that claim. The present study was seen as the first attempt to do so.

STEAC was therefore approached with the three theoretical perspectives in mind and these informed and shaped the disentanglement of the issues and the analysis of the principal influences in the policy-making process. The intention was to generate a case study which would not only throw light on the policy-making process but which was itself illuminated by the theoretical perspectives under scrutiny.

Mode of Investigation

Two basic approaches to the study of policy-making have evolved and these have been categorised by Humes as "insider" or "outsider" approaches. (64) Insider approaches rely substantially on formal interviews with those who were intimately engaged in the policy-making process over a period and are expected to give a first-hand and authentic account of the policy-making process. McPherson and Raab's study in Scotland, and that by Ball in England, (65) are examples of the genre. By contrast, the "outsider" approach, the one preferred by Humes himself, (66) relies predominantly on documentary sources of one kind or another. Marker sought to combine both approaches, supplementing the documentary sources with formal interviews with thirty individuals who had played a leading role in policy-making in teacher education between 1959 and 1981. Those employing the formal interview have to recognise the limitations of oral history as an approach: people can offer a distorted record for all kinds of reasons, not all of them related to lapses of memory. Nevertheless, the testimony of active participants is thought to enrich the analysis of the process itself. Clearly, where there is a dearth of appropriate documentary sources, there would be an obligation to resort to the interview of participants.

As Humes acknowledges, neither approach is normally found in a pure form. There is value, surely, in seeking to exploit the advantages of both approaches rather than insisting that one of them is superior. That is the approach adopted in the present study. STEAC offers a very full documentary record in which each stage of the process is minutely chronicled. The principal sources were the Council's papers, the minutes of the Council's twenty-five meetings, and the full range of background documents, all of the evidence submitted to the Council, and the public and professional response to the Council's report. That considerable corpus of source material forms part of the public record on STEAC. That was supplemented by the press coverage which was a feature of the STEAC process from the time of the Council's inception to the ministerial announcement in parliament. Further source material was obtained from archives in the shape of minutes of the Committee of Principals, of the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC), and of individual colleges. That massive documentary base covers the views of an extensive range of individuals - policy-makers and otherwise - in the shape of personal submissions to the Council, correspondence with the Secretary of State and with others, articles, reports of talks and interviews in the press. Since all of these sources were in the public domain, they provided a strong evidential base to exploit an "outsider" approach.

The "insider" perspective was developed in several ways. In the first place, it was possible to obtain access to the full SED file, which contained a very considerable volume of internal SED confidential papers and correspondence. While there was no obligation to sign the Official Secrets Act, an assurance was given that the confidentiality of these documents would be respected and information relating to named individuals would be used only in a way that prevents identification. Then, secondly, to enrich the "insider" perspective further, it was intended to undertake formal interviews with prominent participants in the STEAC process. The first three interviews involved Bone, the Vice-Convener of STEAC and Principal of

Jordanhill, Smith, one of the two SED assessors, and McNaught, former Principal of Craigie College and a veteran of three campaigns to save that college's future. The three interviews were transcribed and agreed records were added to the sources available for the study. As sources, however, these interviews were extremely disappointing. In each case, the insights provided were extremely limited, partly because the interviews were recorded some ten years after the STEAC report appeared, and partly because the documentary evidence was so extensive, and the interviews, partly, no doubt, because of the passage of the years, contributed nothing that could not be gleaned from the other "insider" evidence, especially when that took the form, as it frequently did, of minuted accounts of an interviewee's contribution to a discussion or a confidential paper developed by the interviewee in the course of the debate. Having access to such authentic "insider" evidence, it seemed unlikely that the strength of the "insider" perspective would be enhanced by interviewing an extended number of the actual participants in the STEAC process, especially when their testimony would be offered ten years after the event.

A second reason for not embarking on a fuller programme of interviews was that Smith, in the end, decided that he would prefer not to have comments attributed. The lack of attribution seriously weakens the credibility of an "insider" account and there were fears that a similar approach might be adopted by other interviewees. For these reasons, it was concluded that a programme of interviews involving other leading players would not be undertaken. That decision was felt justified in view of the fact that, even without the testimony of many other individuals, the "insider" perspective in the study was extremely strong.

Finally, the "insider" perspective was strengthened by the fact that the writer was, in a sense, an "insider". His position as principal of a college of education at the time of STEAC and a member of several other public bodies - the GTC, the CNAA,

the Committee of Principals, the Consultative Committee on the Curriculum (CCC) - facilitated access to a number of confidential files and exchanges of views. By virtue of occupying such a position, the writer participated in institutional and wider debates on STEAC; he was fully involved in the generation of documents that were submitted as evidence or formed part of the public consultation; he was a close friend and colleague of staff in three colleges - Jordanhill, Moray House and Dunfermline; he was aware, as a governor member of the Scottish School of Physical Education Committee at Jordanhill, of the rivalry between the two centres of physical education and had the task, as Principal of Moray House, of integrating male and female physical education at the Cramond campus, following the Secretary of State's decision on STEAC; he was in regular contact with many of those who are thought to be members of the leadership class in Scottish Education. That experience of direct personal and professional involvement in the world STEAC sought to analyse, and the countless interactions of a busy principal, offered a unique insider's perspective, which served to complement the evidence of the public documentation. Given that privileged insider's position, it was especially important to honour the researcher's obligation of impartiality, and, in order to guard against the tendencies to which insider analysts are prone, every effort was made to ensure that judgements were buttressed by evidence from documentary evidence of one kind or another. The fact that the STEAC documentation has remained intact and that the study is therefore replicable provides a further safeguard.

In view of the fact that the evidential base of the study is documentary, a consistent approach to documentary analysis had to be deployed. Ball's approach to "discourse analysis", which emphasises the interrelationship between knowledge and power and rhetoric, is thought to be an appropriate technique in the study of policy-making. He claims that "meanings thus arise not from language but from institutional practices, from power relations, from social position. Words and

concepts change their meaning and their effect as they are deployed within different discourses." (67) Ball offers a fascinating analysis of the way in which the political ideology of the new right subtly exerted itself through a "discourse of derision" into the fabric of the educational changes initiated by the 1988 legislation. Ingenious though that analysis is, it is not completely appropriate in the present context. For one thing, the study is concerned with more than tracing the impact of ideology; for another, contrary to the various applications of discourse analysis that have been attempted by Ball and others, STEAC was not a straightforward demonstration of the power of government over other groups and institutions; and, finally, not all of the documents under discussion could be described as reflecting an ideological standpoint, unless the meaning of that term is unreasonably extended to cover basic assumptions and values that are associated with any document.

The approach adopted in the present study, following Ball's injunction to avoid taking words at their face value - apart from drawing on a professional lifetime's experience of scrutinising documents - was to acknowledge from the outset that every text was a piece of advocacy; that is, it had to be seen as an attempt to persuade rather than as a dispassionate and objective analysis of issues. The technique of documentary analysis adopted was to identify the persuasive objective of each text and to isolate the arguments that were thought to contribute to the overall persuasive impact. In effect, an attempt was made to deconstruct each text: to identify its principal stance on each of the three key areas of the STEAC chosen for analysis - the monotechnic principle, the relationship between institutions, and the national machinery for the planning and funding of higher education.

However, documents have a social and institutional context and the study was not reducible to a piece of extended textual analysis. Having established the principal themes and the range of supporting arguments, it was necessary to impose a structure on the welter of evidence that was assembled. For that purpose, a number

of key organising questions, which derive from the analytical framework, and which feature in the introduction to each of the following chapters, were used to structure the material, to disentangle the issues, and to isolate the individual and institutional sources of pressure on the policy-making process. In that way, it was expected that a credible interpretation of the STEAC process, from its inception to its conclusion, would be evolved. The attempt to generate that interpretation forms the substance of chapters 2 to 6. In chapter 7, the STEAC case study is used as a means of testing the validity of three interpretations of the policy-making process.

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CHAPTER 2: THE GENESIS OF STEAC

Introduction

Why was it considered necessary to establish the STEAC in July 1983? Why were the terms of reference of the STEAC modified in June 1984? What factors led ministers to conclude that a national review of the whole of higher education was necessary? These questions imply that educational documents like the STEAC report have a history and a context. This chapter seeks to identify the factors which influenced the ministerial decision and to undertake an analysis of the educational and political matrix out of which the STEAC review sprang.

Structural Incoherence of Higher Education Provision

While it has been customary to refer to the provision of schooling in Scotland as a system, in the sense that a national set of legal, financial and curricular and other factors contribute to a consistent and uniform pattern of provision across the country, by the beginning of the 1980s no such system had been established for higher education. That phase of advanced education beyond the SCE Higher grade or its equivalent was provided in a variety of institutions that differed strikingly in practically all respects and bore no functional relationship to each other.

The official summary of provision in session 1980-81 (1) was as follows:

Type of Institution	Number	Total Number of Students
Universities	8	48,264
Central Institutions	14	13,906
Colleges of Education	10	7,302
Local Authority Colleges	45	38,428

The universities were under the authority of the University Grants Committee (UGC), which was responsible to and funded by the DES. While the Secretary of State for Scotland controlled the central institutions and the colleges of education, three of the central institutions - the Colleges of Agriculture - fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries for Scotland and were funded by that department. The remaining CIs and the colleges of education ostensibly were controlled by a single agency, the SED, but within that department quite separate arrangements were made for what were clearly regarded as two separate sectors of provision. Finally, the significant amount of higher education that took place in colleges of further education was a service provided by Scotland's twelve regional councils which, while being funded through the rate support grant by the Secretary of State for Scotland, nevertheless carried statutory responsibility for the individual institutions under their authority.

That variation of control was reflected in the different sectors in separate financial arrangements and patterns of accountability, separate procedures for course management, approval and validation, and separate institutional management procedures. Naturally, that structural differentiation was, in turn, reflected in separate infrastructures for student admissions, trade union affiliation, collective bargaining, and even meetings of the principals and directors of the different groups of institutions. Besides, the commitment at all levels to the preservation and protection of sectoral integrity and the pursuit of sectoral interests almost inevitably created wide variations in funding levels and in staff:student ratios, and fostered those very inequalities of provision which a single national integrated system would be bound to eliminate. Ironically, these various inconsistencies were reinforced by separate regulations and statutory instruments pertaining to each of the sectors. Indeed, the existence of at least four separate legal frameworks, each with its necessarily introspective preoccupations, was the fundamental source of the incoherence of the system.

Defenders of those arrangements, especially those in officialdom, maintained that they represented a reasonable differentiation of function between institutions and certainly SED policy throughout the '70s was concerned to support that interpretation of the system. Thus, if universities lay beyond the reach of SED, at least attempts would be made to prevent other institutions duplicating university provision. Furthermore, CIs were strongly encouraged to develop courses in science and technology, even although such areas were available in the university sector, because central institutions were assumed to be strictly vocational rather than academic in their approach. These same institutions, on the other hand, were protected from developing courses in the "liberal arts", since these studies were considered to be the prerogative of the universities. Similarly, colleges of education, even at crucial stages in their development, were denied any opportunity to diversify and were held rigidly to those teacher education functions and to those limited forms of differentiation which they had developed in the early 60s into the cognate fields of community education and social work. They were even prevented from mounting MEd programmes, despite the fact that many college staff taught on MEd programmes of neighbouring universities. That undoubtedly led to the continuation of some of the friction between colleges and universities to which Bell has drawn attention. (2)

However, the attempts that were made to differentiate between institutions and sectors could not prevent serious duplication of provision. For example, social work programmes were provided by institutions in all four sectors. In Glasgow, speech therapy was provided by a college of education, while in Edinburgh it was provided by a central institution. There was even more serious duplication of provision in the major centres such as Glasgow and Edinburgh, where in each of four major institutions there was a department of mathematics, and physics, and

other branches of science and engineering. Moreover, some of these institutions were funded by regional authorities, some by SED, and some by the UGC.

Of course, there are those who claim that the responsiveness of an educational system depends on diversity and variety of approach. However, diversity is a characteristic that can be planned and built into a system. In the early 80s the argument for diversity was not sustainable: what had evolved in separate institutions and sectors over the years had become sanctioned by long practice, and regulations were in place to legitimate these practices. Indeed, the Scottish pattern was even more incoherent than that in England. There, the "binary" system was brought into being to give recognition on the one hand to the universities under the control of the UGC and on the other hand the local authority colleges which from March 1982 fell under the jurisdiction of the National Advisory Body for Local Authority Higher Education. That led to the emergence of two strong but separately funded sectors of higher education, which were prevented from complete disorganisation by being sponsored by the same government department and falling within the sphere of responsibility of a single minister. Scotland could boast no such tidy arrangement: admittedly one half of the binary system was replicated by the UGC-funded universities; but the other "half", while being mainly funded by the single entity of the Scottish Office, was splintered into four clearly identified "sectors".

Ian Wilson, Under-Secretary at SED, was to claim that Scotland did not have a binary system in the sense that SED had not allowed non-university institutions to compete with universities in the provision of courses. (3) It was true that competitiveness between the public sector and UGC institutions was much less marked than south of the border, though there is evidence certainly that there was quite bitter competition, for example in Dundee. (4) However, if Wilson's claim

was intended to point to a more systematically organised provision of higher education, it could not have been more mistaken.

The Inconclusiveness of the Council for Tertiary Education in Scotland (CTES)

The Government's attempts to tackle some of the ambiguities and uncertainties in tertiary education on a national basis can be traced to the decision to establish the CTES. The SED wrote to institutions in January 1978 inviting comments on the terms of reference and constitution of a CTES. (5) The context of that letter made it clear that the CTES would concentrate on the non-university sector. Government policy in the '70s was to retain the distinction between the university and non-university institutions. When, in 1975, the Labour administration began to prepare legislative proposals for devolved assemblies for Scotland and Wales, the universities were excluded. The government accepted the view of the universities that it was essential for the well-being and standing of the UK universities that they should all continue to operate under the aegis of the UGC. It was recognised that there was a need to ensure that there was effective liaison between the universities and other HE institutions in Scotland, but it was maintained that that was best secured through adjustments to the UGC mode of operation rather than by repatriation. The universities claimed that they were a "unique sector, and their development and funding must be dealt with nationally at the highest possible level". (6) Despite the opposition of teachers' unions and others in Scotland, the government considered that it would be retrogressive to bring universities within the control of a Scottish Assembly. The decision to establish the CTES was not incompatible with that policy position. The paper accompanying the SED letter on the establishment of CTES stated that it was government's intention, assuming that a Scottish administration came into being, to establish a Council for Higher Education in Scotland that would bring together the main sectors. That Council would discuss matters of common interest, "notably liaison between the university

and non-university sectors of education, and co-ordination of the efforts and resources of each, and report its findings to the appropriate bodies." (7)

The reference to reporting to "the appropriate bodies" makes it clear that the government's intention was to respect the universities' relationships with the UGC, as well as the responsibilities of the SED for the rest of higher education. No change was therefore intended to the established division of responsibilities for higher education in Scotland and the establishment of CTES was clearly an attempt to introduce a degree of rationalisation into what, even then, was regarded as a complex and untidy set of arrangements in the non-university sector.

The CTES was established in May 1979 with the following terms of reference:

"To advise the Secretary of State on such questions relating to tertiary education in Scotland as he may remit to the Council, and on such other matters that the Council may consider relevant to the development of non-university tertiary education and its relationship with university education in Scotland." (8)

The CTES was chaired by Sir Norman Graham, former Secretary of the SED, and had a membership of 23, covering a wide range of educational and other interests. At the Council's first meeting on 8 June 1979, Alex Fletcher, MP, Minister for Industry and Education, invited them "to identify those aspects of post-school education requiring urgent attention, having particular regard to the importance of ensuring that young people are adequately equipped to enter employment". In considering the ministerial request, the Council reached the conclusion that the sector appeared "on the surface at least, to comprise an inadequately co-ordinated collection of three centrally-funded groups of colleges (central institutions, colleges of education, and colleges of agriculture) and the different further education

services run by the twelve regional and island councils. All had grown up and functioned to an undue extent separately. It seemed to us that such a system carried a considerable risk of inefficient use of resources, of overlapping provision in some areas, and under-provision of others, and of such complexity as to be confusing in the minds of the public". (9) Indeed, the Chairman of the Council, Sir Norman Graham, claimed, "It is fair to say that no-one starting from scratch would have devised the present structure except in a nightmare." (10) The Council therefore reported to the Secretary of State that in their view there was an urgent need for a reassessment of the system.

In a letter dated 26 October 1979 to the Chairman of the Council, the Secretary of State, George Younger, MP, "welcomed the proposal that the Council should undertake a review of the structure and management of tertiary education in Scotland . . . While the structure and management of the universities themselves would be excluded from the scope of such a review, it would take full account of the relationship between the universities and other institutions providing tertiary education and of the potential for sharing resources between the university and non-university sectors." (11) Nine members were appointed to undertake the review: apart from Sir Norman Graham, there were three principals, a headteacher, a director of education, and the General Secretary of the EIS. There were also three assessors, including the Senior Chief HMI, John Ferguson. Undoubtedly, the selection of such a powerful committee was based on the realisation that it had to grapple with some serious difficulties. The committee had its first meeting on 19 January 1980. Commendably, the CTES began with its own analysis of the system before consulting widely on the issues its analysis had identified. Sixty-three submissions were received, with the most common single issue being, in the words of CTES itself, "the place of the universities in the system and the short-sightedness of initiating the review that did not include them". (12)

In the light of the submissions received, and of visits to some thirteen institutions, the Council concluded that the separate management of the different sectors "creates unnecessary barriers to the flexible use of resources and is liable to lead to duplication of administrative machinery and staff at both institutional and central levels". (13) It therefore went on to identify two models and much of the report consisted of an evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of these. Model A involved the establishment of a national authority which would "determine the number and distribution of advanced full-time courses and student places and would allocate funds for this purpose", directly to those colleges mainly concerned with advanced full-time work, and through regional and island councils for advanced full-time work in "mixed-purpose" colleges. (14) According to Model B a national authority would determine the number and distribution of advanced full time courses and student places. However, all colleges would be under the management of the regional and island councils, which would allocate funds and decide on institutional function, staffing levels and capital investment throughout the system.

The feature common to both models - the national authority - was clearly conceived on the UGC analogy, as a way of determining the distribution of funds. Having been convinced of the value "of bringing a wider spectrum of informed judgement into the decision-making process", the Council envisaged an authority that included "practising academics" and "people drawn from the business world". (15) This separation of function was recommended as the principle to be followed by the national authority in its policy role. That principle would prevent or minimise any tendency towards academic drift in the non-advanced institutions. Model A would place all colleges doing advanced work, that is to say degree level work, within the one sector. In this way, advanced work would be performed by autonomous institutions operating on a national basis. The proponents of Model B invoked the experience of local authorities in running FE establishments successfully and saw

merit in a system in which authorities carried responsibility for all education in their area from the nursery school to the higher education institution.

The Council was clearly divided on the merits of the two models and, in the end, "a clear majority of the full Council" favoured Model A, which became the CTES recommendation to the Secretary of State. (16) However, there was sufficient support for Model B to justify a minority report, which was widely acknowledged to be submitted by David Semple, Director of Lothian, and John Pollock of the EIS. In keeping with the majority recommendation to distinguish consistently between advanced and non-advanced sectors, the Council recommended that the three largest local authority colleges - Glasgow College of Technology, Napier College in Edinburgh, and Bell College of Technology in Hamilton - should be directly funded and independent of local authorities. These three institutions provided 81%, 80% and 69% respectively of advanced level work. Finally, since Leith Nautical College was a small, specialised institution with fewer than half its students on advanced courses, it was recommended for transfer to local authority control like its sister college, Glasgow College of Nautical Studies. As far as the other two sectors were concerned, the colleges of education and the central institutions, the Council introduced a wide range of recommendations to harmonise their management and other arrangements, with the intention of introducing common modes of academic governance based largely on practice in the central institutions. Having formulated its views, the Council made an interim report to the full Council in April 1981, and submitted its final report on 29 September 1981.

Members of the Council should have been able to predict that the public reaction would focus on the non-involvement of the universities in its deliberations. Dunfermline College of Physical Education regretted the divisiveness implicit in the CTES report (17); similar regrets were expressed by Craigie College (18); and Moray House was emphatically of the view that the successor body should include

the universities (19). For its part, Aberdeen College of Education stated, somewhat ambiguously, "We in this college have many fruitful and cordial ties with the University of Aberdeen. If the Scottish universities were of a mind to collaborate we believe it might be fruitful to enter into discussion at the national level on any plan which might expand co-operation between independent institutions across the whole pattern of tertiary education." (20) Finally, St Andrew's College of Education responded to the report in these words:

"It would not be in the best interests of tertiary education in Scotland to perpetuate indefinitely the present binary system. It is a matter of great regret, therefore, that a major element in tertiary education, the universities, as the guardian of academic values and standards, has been excluded from the rationalisation programme". (21)

The principals as a group expressed themselves "strongly opposed" to the views contained in the minority report, believing that "the need for change should be based on planning at national and not regional level". (22) Besides, they were concerned that there would be a reduction in the independence and self-government of the individual institutions if they were to come under regional control. Conversely, the National Union of Students (NUS) supported the idea contained in the minority report. Its view was that by placing all tertiary education under regional authority control there would be an increase in democratic accountability. That move was also seen as a way of "bringing education closer to the views of its consumers". (23)

The volume of criticism directed at the proposal for a central authority to co-ordinate non-university higher education was understandable. In an attempt to forestall that criticism, the CTES claimed that "the Council's terms of reference exclude the structure and management of the universities from the review". (24) However, the

letter from the Secretary of State establishing the review was explicit and required the Council to consider "the development of non-university tertiary education and its relationship with university education in Scotland"; and it was obliged "to take full account of the relationship between the universities and other institutions providing tertiary education and of the potential for sharing resources between the university and non-university sectors". (25) In the light of that clear instruction from the Secretary of State it is surprising that the issue of the relationship between the universities and other institutions simply did not feature in the Council's deliberations. The Council's concern was exclusively with non-university higher education: it was clearly preoccupied by the desire to create for that sector a counterbalancing agency to the UGC in Scotland. In three brief paragraphs all that the Council recommended was that the UGC should have observer status on the new central agency and that there should be joint arrangements to discuss the number of student places required in each subject area at degree level along with other exchanges of "comparable information on such subjects as unit costs". (26)

The closest the Council came to meeting the terms of its remit was in the single sentence in which it recommended that the new authority could take over from the Department responsibility for arranging "the annual exchange of information" about proposals to start new courses "with the aim of alerting individual universities and colleges to areas where duplication, overlap, gaps in provision, or scope for co-operation could arise, with a view to inviting them to hold discussions with one another". That was a somewhat feeble response to a key feature of the Council's terms of reference. It is perhaps best explained as evidence of the reluctance to transgress between areas of ministerial responsibility. The universities were controlled from London, and all that was required was a mechanism to keep lines of communication open between the Secretary of State and his UK counterpart. Besides, for the Scottish Office, the central agenda for CTES lay elsewhere: it concerned the extension of its control over non-university higher education. CTES

therefore could be considered not merely as a missed opportunity but as a clear example of a national body failing to address one of the fundamental issues contained in its remit.

The government's response to the CTES report did not appear till 19 July 1983, twenty-two months after the report had been submitted. That delay was to become the focus of critical comment by members of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the House of Commons when they cross-examined James Scott, Secretary of the SED, on 25th June 1985. (27) Mr Sylvester, MP, expressed his impatience in these terms: "In the meantime, time passes. I am fascinated by the speed of this operation. The report referred to was published in 1981, which presumably meant it was started some time before, that is four years ago. Do you not think it is all terribly slow?" (28)

In a parliamentary written answer (29) George Younger intimated that he was "in broad agreement with the general conclusion of the Council that improvements in the co-ordination of tertiary education in Scotland were needed" and he proposed firstly to replace the CTES "after the end of 1983" by a new body, to be known as the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council to advise him "on questions relating to the development of non-university tertiary education and the priorities to be pursued"; secondly, to retain the existing central institutions and colleges of education as directly funded institutions and to remove "any unnecessary formal distinctions between the two categories of institution"; thirdly, to confer on Bell College of Technology, Glasgow College of Technology, and Napier College of Commerce and Technology the status of central institutions; fourthly, to transfer Leith Nautical College to Lothian Regional Council; fifthly, to retain the existing funding arrangements for local authority further education colleges; and, finally, to continue the arrangement whereby advanced courses were approved by the SED.

A gloss on the first and central recommendation was provided by James Scott in responding to the charge by the PAC chairman, Mr R Sheldon, MP, that "no action seems to have been taken on the main issues". (30) Taking exception to that remark, James Scott replied

"The central recommendation of CTES, however, which underlies a lot of subsidiary recommendations, was that the Secretary of State should directly fund the whole tertiary education sector, and that a successor body to CTES should be set up in effect to distribute that money amongst the constituent institutions. The Secretary of State did not do nothing on that recommendation: he rejected it. He did not feel that it was right to take away from local authorities what would have been the whole of further education and he had particularly in mind the emerging pattern of a closer relationship between school education and further education at the non-advanced level. So that particular recommendation failed, not from a lack of action, but because it was considered and rejected." (31)

By referring to the removal of "the whole of further education" from local authority responsibility, James Scott was exaggerating or was not quite master of his brief, for CTES proposed the transfer only of "advanced further education from local authority control". However, exaggeration was compatible with James Scott's response to the charge of departmental lethargy in implementing CTES: he was anxious to convey the impression that the implementation was a formidable undertaking. That is conveyed by his summing up: "I could perhaps sum up by saying that some of the CTES recommendations have been implemented, others have been considered and rejected, and a third category are in abeyance, pending the STEAC report." (32)

The SED's stance here is not impressive. Under pressure to explain its apparent dilatoriness in implementing CTES recommendations, James Scott rationalises the failure to take action in two ways: firstly, the recommendation to streamline non-university higher education was rejected out of a fear of alienating education authorities, whereas, for most of the 1980s, government policy was directed to the weakening of these same authorities; secondly, other recommendations could not be taken forward, pending the outcome of the successor body to CTES - the STEAC. That is, ministerial inactivity was excused by claiming that it was reasonable to await the outcome of STEAC, whereas the issues were precisely those which CTES was expected, but failed, to address.

To what extent did CTES contribute to a more effective ordering of higher education? According to one commentator, "the long-awaited decision leaves the present system unchanged". (33) Another considered that the Secretary of State "had squandered an opportunity to rationalise the post-16 sector" and had "marginally adjusted the frontier running through this confusing landscape". (34)

A more detailed analysis confirms these candid assessments. Despite the obligation in the terms of reference "to take full account of the relationship between the universities and other institutions providing tertiary education", the ministerial statement, reflecting the Council's disregard of that matter in its review, left the division between the two sectors as rigid and impermeable as ever. Similarly, the four sectors of non-university higher education were firmly reinforced: some of the formal distinctions between central institutions and colleges of education would be removed but their respective roles and functions would continue; colleges of agriculture would continue to be funded by a separate government department as, indeed, the CTES, without advancing any justification, had recommended; and, again in line with the indecisiveness of CTES, advanced courses would continue to be available in local authority further education colleges. However, despite the

Council's avowed aim to rationalise the institutional context of advanced and non-advanced work, the Secretary of State's decision confirmed that advanced work would continue to be possible in further education colleges, and non-advanced work would continue in central institutions. There was a similar blurring of distinctions in the decision to allow central institutions to continue to perform their national role, while providing for the central funding of specific courses to meet national needs in the further education colleges. Finally, inconsistencies would be introduced in the course approval arrangements: the existing procedures for the approval of advanced courses would continue but would be extended to include certain non-advanced courses "of national significance". So far are these decisions from rationalising and clarifying institutional roles and functions they actually muddy the waters still further. The categories of national and local, advanced and non-advanced, central funding and local authority funding are so inconsistently defined that they seem calculated to create confusion rather than clarity.

Perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the Secretary of State's decision on CTES was a significantly enhanced role for the SED. The threat to Departmental hegemony was the establishment of a "McNab", the Scottish equivalent of the NAB. Despite the fact that the minister with responsibility for industry and education at the Scottish Office, Allan Stewart, appeared to favour that solution, (35) the Secretary of State rejected it in favour of a purely advisory body, one with "no teeth". (36) Instead, the government increased "its own already formidable powers" (37) by proposing to move three major local authority colleges into the SED-funded central institution category. Moreover, the prospects of still further transfers into the SED's premier league of institutions was held open by the provision to fund directly certain courses in local authority colleges. That aggrandisement of SED's role was not contradicted by the decision to relegate Leith Nautical College to the status of a local authority institution. That decision removed

from SED control an institution that dealt mainly with non-degree courses and would therefore reinforce the SED self-deception that it dealt with "advanced courses". More to the point, given the substantial reduction in demand, which could not justify two centres of nautical studies, Lothian Region, the receiving authority, was left with the difficult task of closing the college as one of two national centres.

One critic considered that the government's motivation was "a dimly perceived élitism reflected in a bid to bring as high a proportion as possible of the more prestigious courses into the SED's grasp". (38) It is true that in all of these ways the SED's control was enhanced. However, an equally important conclusion is that the existing inconsistencies and anomalies of non-university higher education in Scotland were destined to persist, if not to be exacerbated.

If the system itself was under strain, which was unlikely to be alleviated by the CTES decisions, what effect did these have on the individual sectors of higher education? On the face of it, the central institutions stood to gain by acquiring in excess of 10,000 FTE students from the three transferring colleges, almost doubling the number of students on advanced courses in central institutions and helping to strengthen the profile of the sector as a major provider of higher education in Scotland. One of the CI principals, claiming to speak for some of his colleagues, welcomed the Secretary of State's decision precisely because he rejected the McNab solution. In his view, an advisory body was much to be preferred "because we saw from the experience of the UGC that partiality and special pleading would sour relationships". (39) However, there were others who would have welcomed the less restraining environment that a McNab might have provided. The preference for the status quo was explained by the fact that as a group the central institutions felt themselves to be capable of flourishing under SED tutelage. Their student numbers had been allowed to increase, while those in universities had

been frozen, and their perception as responsive and innovative institutions providing good value for money, certainly when compared with colleges of education and universities, was a source of commonly expressed satisfaction, perhaps even, in the opinion of one critic, "self-satisfaction". (40) However, their different status vis à vis the universities and their less generous funding were continuing sources of bickering and they were critical of CTES for failing to establish those relationships between central institutions and universities which would have allowed questions of institutional parity to be raised. (41)

However, the central institutions represented too varied a range of institutions to constitute a cohesive group. The largest of them, with their technological mission, compared themselves unfavourably with the burgeoning polytechnics that had been established south of the border, largely by merging technological institutes with smaller specialist institutions, such as colleges of education and colleges of art and design. The principals of the CIs signalled their aspirations by seeking to secure membership of the influential Committee of Directors of Polytechnics. The remaining CIs in Scotland, all of them specialist and largely monotechnic institutions, having retained their independence, also retained the vulnerability of small specialist institutions, some of them with fewer than 1,000 students.

For their part, the regional council FE colleges had been described as "the forgotten sector". (42) Despite boasting twice as many students on advanced courses as in all of the CIs combined, they were already aware that their largest institutions - Glasgow College of Technology and Napier College in Edinburgh - would be moving into the CI sector and taking with them some 10,000 students. The CIs' gain in that respect was very clearly further education's loss. That change, and the threat of more "promotions" to follow, once a significant level of advanced work was achieved, was clearly demoralising. Indeed, the President of the Scottish Further Education Association, George Stewart, had his fears confirmed that there

would be a firm split between advanced and non-advanced further education, with local colleges becoming junior colleges. He stated: "We will not be able to attract the higher quality staff into local authority sector. It is a retrograde step." (43)

The difficulty was that the further education establishments varied significantly in the amount of advanced work they undertook, the majority of them having fewer than 10% of students on such courses. Their fear was that, if the number of qualified school leavers declined as seriously as the 1983 SED projections indicated, and if the universities were able to maintain their market share, the CIs would scoop up the remaining HE work. Such an outcome would be extremely damaging to the FE sector as a whole and would also lead to a concentration of HE in a limited number of institutions and centres, thus restricting access to educational opportunities. It does not matter, in the present context, that that fear was based on a serious miscalculation about the demand for higher education: what matters is that this anxiety was given expression and can legitimately be interpreted as evidence of a remarkable absence of confidence which those working in the sector entertained about their future development.

The Persistence of the College of Education Problem

Unquestionably, of all the sectors in higher education the colleges of education were experiencing the most acute difficulties. The secretary of SED himself described them as undergoing a period of "turmoil". (44) The root cause of these difficulties lay in the demographic decline. In 1965 the number of live births in Scotland was 100,660. By 1975 that figure had fallen to 67,943. Inevitably, pupil numbers were bound to fall, with a corresponding reduction in the need for teachers. Two factors drove the system to crisis in 1976/77. The SED forecasts for intake to colleges indicated that all that was required for that year was roughly 50% of the intake for 1975. Secondly, in 1976 there were serious prospects of teacher unemployment. In June of 1976 local authorities were estimating that about

400 secondary students and nearly 1,500 primary students about to qualify would be unable to gain employment. (45) At Jordanhill College alone, with in excess of 300 students graduating, the news received by students was that there were seven posts available in Strathclyde. There followed a period of intense disruption for the college of education system, with all the colleges of education being occupied for a sustained period.

The Department's response to these difficulties was to issue a paper in January of 1977 proposing the closure of four colleges - Craigie, Dunfermline, Callendar Park, and Craiglockhart. (46) In the face of vigorous opposition from the colleges themselves and of intense political pressure from within his own party, the Secretary of State, Bruce Millan, withdrew the closure proposal and declared in December of 1977 that the ten-college system would continue. (47) However, it was a stay of execution rather than a reprieve. The school population continued to decline; the prospects of teacher unemployment continued to grow, with the GTC Supply Committee estimating that only 78 primary teachers could be employed from an output of 703, and 991 secondary students from an output of 1,684. (48)

In line with its analysis of the situation, SED proposed intake figures for 1980/81 which meant a decrease of 29% in the primary diploma, 35% in the primary postgraduate course, and 16% in the secondary course over 1979/80. These figures would have led to a total number of students in all courses in all colleges of 5,967 against an estimated college capacity of 14,450. (49) Obviously, that was an embarrassing prospect for a Conservative government for it would place ministers in a position where they had to contemplate the closure of colleges when, only three years before, they had vigorously attacked the Labour government for undertaking precisely that kind of action.

However, the GTC came to the rescue. Stimulated by a paper from a leading member of the EIS, (50) the Supply Committee had recommended to the GTC that the progressive reduction in intake required a reconsideration of the ten-college system. The recommendation from the Supply Committee was approved by the GTC itself at its meeting on 5 March 1980. (51) The GTC subsequently wrote to the Secretary of State (52) recommending that "there should be a reduction in the number of colleges engaged in training teachers". The basic concern of the GTC was the overall weakening of the system by progressive pro rata reductions in intake with the consequent proportionate reductions in staffing. It maintained

"There is a need to retain and develop the larger units which, because of the size and the variety of interests of their staffs, are better able to diversify, to respond rapidly to changing demands, to support specialist facilities, to foster educational research and development, and to provide centres of excellence for the educational system as a whole. In recent years, the larger colleges have suffered disproportionate cuts in order to sustain the smaller."

That provided the impetus and in August 1980 the government proposed the closure of two colleges - Callendar Park College of Education and Hamilton College of Education - and the merger of two others - Notre Dame College and Craiglockhart College. Despite a vigorous campaign by all of the colleges concerned, and the mounting of the most intense pressure, on this occasion the government stood firm and the 1981/82 session opened to a seven-college system. However, the student number projections continued to represent a cause for alarm. The SED projections for primary represented a further reduction in overall student numbers from 2320 to 1600 for 1983/84, and the corresponding figures for secondary were from 3110 to 1760. Indeed, the longer term projection for secondary was 450. (53)

One example of the extent of the decline can be illustrated by considering the case of physical education. When the two degrees in physical education were established in 1975, the intake to the Scottish School of Physical Education at Jordanhill was 100 students per year and, because of the apparently larger wastage of female physical education students, 165 at Dunfermline College of Physical Education College, a total of 265. In 1982/83 the combined intake to physical education programmes for the whole country was 40. (54)

The vulnerability of the colleges was emphasised by several other embarrassing factors. Firstly, the decline in staffing did not keep pace with the decline in student numbers. Thus, in 1975/76, there were just over 15,000 students, and that number had reduced to 7,072 by 1983/84, a drop of 53%. (55) On the other hand, the number of staff dropped only from 1432 to 839 over the same period, a drop of 41%. (56) Secondly, the staff:student ratio of 1:8.5 in 1983 compared very unfavourably with the figure of 1:11 which was the figure used by the DES for comparable institutions in England. The application of the DES ratio to Scotland in 1983/84 would have required a further reduction of 132 staff. Thirdly, it was well known that many of the student groups in the colleges were extremely small, particularly in those colleges offering a BEd degree in association with a neighbouring university. Students on that programme had the same rights of choice as other university students and colleges were under an obligation to ensure that student choice was met. The result was a relatively small number of students studying, in groups of two, three, or four, an enormous number of option choices. In all, there were 101 groups. Of these, 50 consisted of fewer than ten students. (57) Fourthly, SED had evidence of a substantial pool of unemployed teachers. The exact figure was never known but repeated reference was made to it in the annual consultation paper on intake to the colleges. Indeed, when the PAC came to interview James Scott, Secretary of SED, in June 1985, he was put under pressure to explain why it was that somewhere between 30% and 40% of the output

were still without posts two years after graduation. Finally, the colleges of education fared badly when their unit costs were compared with those of the central institutions. In 1981/82, the unit cost in a college of education was £3,800, whereas in the central institutions it was £3,062. (58)

These difficulties had a two-fold effect. In the first place, an enormous amount of management time was devoted to staffing matters, to seeking ways of ensuring that entitlement and complement were in balance, to evaluating cases for premature retirement or voluntary redundancy, and to handling the morale implications of a declining sector in which jobs were constantly thought to be at risk. The ability of colleges to handle these difficulties was helped by the fact that there were extremely generous voluntary redundancy arrangements under the Crombie regulations. However, in August 1981, the Secretary of State intimated that the Crombie regulations would be withdrawn after one further year, thus making voluntary redundancy a much less attractive proposition and intensifying staff management problems in the colleges. A second difficulty was educational. While the years in question were years of major development within the colleges - through the increase of in-service work, the extension of research and development, and the introduction of a 4-year BEd degree as the basic qualifying course for primary teachers - the intellectual climate of the institutions was not helped by the fact that recruitment of new staff was virtually eliminated. Professional education needs to be provided by people with recent, fresh experience of working in schools and other settings. When recruitment dries up the quality of educational life an institution is able to sustain is bound to be diminished.

Naturally, while college staff responded positively to the new challenges, particularly the development of in-service activities, morale remained extremely low. The seven remaining institutions, aware of the growing discrepancy between their total student numbers and their overall capacity, and aware also of the political

unacceptability of diversification, expected still further closures. Finally, the vulnerability of these institutions was made even more acute by the fact that they were small, specialised institutions. A careful analysis of their function and of their relationship to other institutions appeared to many to be long overdue. It was hardly surprising that a director of education could publicly refer to the college of education system as "languishing" (59) and that another commentator referred to the colleges as "beleaguered". (60)

Given the extent of these difficulties, it is remarkable that the CTES could come up with a set of recommendations which were restricted to the tidying up of the administrative and legal framework within which the colleges operated. Undoubtedly, one of the factors leading to the establishment of the STEAC was the recognition that the persistent problems in the college of education sector were unlikely to be addressed without seeing these institutions in relation to the universities.

The Extension of the Council's Terms of Reference

As has been noted, the Secretary of State intimated in July 1983 that CTES would be replaced "after the end of 1983" by a new body, the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council, whose task would be to advise him on "the development of non-university tertiary education". In a written answer on 5 June 1984 (61) the Secretary of State intimated that he had decided to appoint the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council with the following terms of reference:

"To consider and report on the future strategy for higher education in Scotland, including the arrangements for providing institutions with financial support and *the general principles which should govern relationships between universities and other institutions . . .*"

(italics added)

The Secretary of State went on to indicate that the review of higher education strategy would be undertaken with the agreement of the Secretary of State for Education and Science, and that it would complement the strategy reviews already begun by the UGC and by the NAB. That extension of the remit of STEAC to include the universities was startling. No doubt the evidence before the Secretary of State indicated that there was a need for a review of higher education in general in the light of some of the considerations that have already been adduced in the course of this chapter. Nor is there any doubt that the delay in the announcement is attributable to the fact that protracted negotiations were required with Number 10, the Treasury, and the DES, since the review covered the responsibilities of more than one minister.

What then were the factors which persuaded the Secretary of State to incorporate the universities in the review to be undertaken by the STEAC? There were three developments: firstly, the projection from the SED on the student numbers entering higher education; secondly, the proposal from the University of Aberdeen that there should be a merger of the three higher education institutions in that city; and thirdly, the perception by the Scottish universities that they were being marginalised in the sense that they were denied an input to the review of higher education introduced by the DES and, on the evidence of the original terms of reference of STEAC, were denied a locus in discussions in Scotland.

The Demand for Higher Education

In December 1983 the SED produced a statistical bulletin on higher education projections. (62) One of the key projections was that the size of the 17 year-old age group, having peaked in 1981/82, would fall by 1994/95, to about 60% of the peak level. The bulletin noted that the proportion of the age group obtaining entrance qualification for each year had progressively increased and would continue

to do so. Despite that, however, the implication was that there would be a substantial reduction in demand for higher education from school leavers. Of course, demographic projections are far from being an exact science, depending as they do in a series of assumptions about individual preferences and the social factors that influence these. Not unexpectedly then, the SED 1983 projections were challenged, most notably by the Association of University Teachers (Scotland). Indeed, in response to critical comments, SED revised its projections in a subsequent publication. (63) In the context of the present discussion, however, the accuracy or otherwise of the 1983 projections is not at issue: what matters is that certain projections were made which pointed to a clear need to consider the future pattern of higher education in Scotland. Moreover, the projections pointed to the need for a discussion of the total pattern of educational provision and any such analysis could not reasonably exclude the universities.

Proposal for Institutional Merger in Aberdeen

The immediate relevance of the universities to any consideration of higher education in Scotland was reinforced by another surprising development. In February, 1983, the Court of Aberdeen University requested the Secretary of State for Scotland and the Secretary of State for Education and Science "to establish an independent committee to examine the educational and financial factors involved in the possibility of the union of Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology (RGIT) and the Aberdeen College of Education with the University of Aberdeen". (64) The university defended its initiative by claiming that "the political parties have identified a need to increase collaboration across the binary line between the universities and the other sectors of higher education". It saw substantial academic and other benefits in bringing the expertise of the university and the RGIT in Engineering Science together to create a critical mass in a single institution; it envisaged the integration of the Aberdeen College of Education to create a new faculty of education as a "logical development" in view of the government's intention to create

an all-graduate profession. With remarkable candour the university expressed its dissatisfaction with "wasteful duplication of effort and facilities" and could see no point in "tinkering with collaboration". What was required was a radical change, based on the acknowledgement that the north of Scotland has "too small a population to support three degree-awarding institutions". Its position was summed up in these words: "In addition to the important academic advantages and substantial scholarly and intellectual enrichment which would stem from a union, including, in many cases, major economies of scale in teaching and in the use of buildings and equipment (with a potential for sale of considerable building capacity), there would also be valuable administrative economies in the merging of the present central administration of RGIT and the college of education with the administration structure of the university". Indeed, the Principal was so committed to this initiative that in his submission to the UGC for that year he drew attention to the educational and other benefits that could be derived from a full merger. (65)

For all that, the Aberdeen University initiative was certainly unilateral. The Principal of Aberdeen College of Education, James Scotland, first learned of the development in the press report. As it happens, the Committee of Principals met on the day the story broke in the press and James Scotland expressed himself as "slightly surprised to read the press report". (66) The evidence from RGIT is that there are no relevant documents on file and the college knew nothing of the development (67); and a senior member of the University has indicated that he was unaware of the Principal's plan. (68)

Naturally, the McNicol plan required consultation between the Secretary of State and Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education and Science. George Younger's letter reviewed a number of options. (69) The first of these would have involved referring the matter back to the university with the recommendation that they should pursue it directly with the other two institutions.

However, discussions with these institutions had ruled out that possibility. The second option was a limited enquiry to the Aberdeen area. However, that was rejected also on the grounds that "the outcome of an Aberdeen enquiry would have implications for decisions elsewhere in Scotland" and "set a precedent for a string of other similar enquiries". The third option, and one that the Secretary of State favoured, concerned an enquiry "into relationships between universities and other institutions in Scotland as a whole". Not only was that attractive on the grounds that it was a reasonable response to Principal McNicol, but it would serve to complement Sir Keith Joseph's "own strategy review", which is "now in hand".

It is clear that the matter did not end there. Encouraged by the establishment of the STEAC committee, McNicol sought to defer some key decisions with regard to RGIT but the Department objected on the grounds that it might be seen as prejudicing the STEAC report. McNicol subsequently received support from his MP, Gerald Malone, who wrote complaining that "a great deal of uncertainty throughout the educational establishment in the city" had been caused by the creation of STEAC, which suggested that the SED were "not prepared to accord the Principal's proposals the priority which I certainly believe they deserve". The Department's reply indicated that the solution to the proposed enquiry had to be a national one. It is therefore clear that the Aberdeen University initiative brought into public discussion the question of the relationship between the different sectors of higher education. It demanded a national response and undoubtedly added to the pressures which pointed to a national review of higher education in Scotland, encompassing the universities.

The Threatened Marginalisation of the Scottish Universities

A key factor which influenced the change in the terms of reference of the STEAC was the threatened marginalisation of the Scottish universities. A feeling of animosity had been developing in Scotland towards the UGC since the early '80s.

The universities were staggered by the severity of the 1981 grant allocations. Under great pressure, the UGC was forced to impose a regime of the most severe fiscal stringency. Aberdeen University suffered a grant reduction of 23%; Stirling a reduction of 25%. The remaining institutions were obliged to halt expansion in an effort to maintain the unit of resource for teaching. The effect of these measures was that by 1984 the universities could look back on a period of very serious retrenchment while the central institutions had been able to increase student numbers by some 50%. Furthermore, the withdrawal of funding for pharmacy at Heriot-Watt University provided further evidence of how punitive and insensitive to Scottish needs a London-based UGC could be. It was against that background that the DES initiated a major review on the future strategy for higher education. As its contribution to that review, the UGC initiated a major consultative exercise "more open and extensive than ever before". Unfortunately, the letter inviting replies to a major questionnaire was interpreted by Scots as unduly dismissive. It read, "Part of this letter refers primarily to the situation in England and Wales. We would ask readers concerned with the different systems in Scotland and Northern Ireland to make the appropriate adjustments." (70) That peremptory reference angered the Scottish universities and encouraged the feeling that Scottish institutions were not well served by the UGC and reinforced the developing disaffection.

Undoubtedly, the decision by the DES on 1 September 1983 to initiate a major review of higher education was of crucial importance. On that day, Sir Keith Joseph wrote to the UGC advising that it was "essential to co-operate with NAB in parallel exercises which would help to shape a strategy for higher education". It also made reference to "basic policies of rationalisation". (71) Williams wrote to Swinnerton-Dyer of the UGC to point out that the Secretary of State's advice "has caused great uneasiness in Scottish universities. At a time when all institutions of higher education had been urged to co-operate at a local level, Scottish universities cannot gainfully feature in any policy-making discussions

between the UGC and the NAB." (72) In a subsequent letter, he claimed that the discussion initiated by the Secretary of State "which will inevitably lead to regular meetings with long-term objectives, cannot take into account the interests of Scottish universities". (73) The letter indicated that the decision by the Secretary of State, Sir Keith Joseph, had been "an omission" and, Williams argued, "is only one illustration of the serious problems which can arise. As another example, I can cite the UGC questionnaire of 1.11.83." (74) It was Williams' view that, when Sir Keith Joseph made his announcement on 1 September 1983, he "had forgotten to include Scotland". (75) The difficulty, of course, was that universities appeared to be completely marginalised from extremely important discussions about their future: they were apparently prohibited from engagement in discussions south of the border. Meanwhile, in Scotland, the STEAC had been given terms of reference which specifically referred to non-university higher education. The universities' response was to mobilise themselves to protect their position. At a meeting on 30 January 1984 a working party was established by all eight Scottish universities and recommended to courts

- "(a) that the Chairman of the Committee of Principals be authorised on their behalf to invite the UGC to set up a Scottish Committee which "would have a special interest in the Scottish universities and those aspects of higher education in Scotland which would be the concern of SED and STEAC and would affect the Scottish universities";
- (b) that a formal body be set up to represent the Scottish universities on common issues other than those which are the concern of the CVCP; and
- (c) that the universities pursue closer association and co-operation with other institutions of HE in their locality on an informal basis." (76)

The press reports of that meeting were significant. *The Glasgow Herald* maintained that "Scots universities stop short of a breakaway". (77) *The Scotsman* claimed that "Universities fear being overlooked". (78) Both articles indicated the extreme concern expressed by the university principals about their apparent exclusion from a major review of higher education. They were also concerned that their lines of communication with the bodies that will make crucial decisions about resource allocation were far from clear.

"We are urgently advising our courts to seek an arrangement ensuring that the Scottish universities will figure no less than their sister institutions in England and Wales in any future moves shaping higher education in Britain. We are especially concerned that the distinctiveness of the Scottish secondary system and the historic links between Scottish communities and their local universities could inadvertently be compromised by decisions taken between the UGC and the NAB." (79)

Some indication of the strength of feeling can be gauged from the fact that those who were strong supporters of the UGC were driven to make highly critical comments. For example, Watson of St Andrews, who feared control by Edinburgh even more than he feared control by London, implying that institutions would be "well and truly income-capped, student-capped and research-capped", nevertheless went on to say that the special Scottish element in university education is often overlooked "by people who are more than 400 miles away", even although he was prepared to put part of the blame for this on those who represented Scotland on the UGC as assessors. (80) Burnett of Edinburgh, another strong supporter of the UGC, was quoted as saying, "If we are to get any sense in the Scottish system there will have to be machinery to bring about co-operation between the Scottish Education Department, STEAC, the Scottish universities and the UGC." (81)

Gowenlock, a member of the UGC, referred to the widespread view "however illusory, that decisions which are binding on Scottish universities have been taken in ignorance by a remote London-based English committee". (82) These views were reinforced in the press. David Hearst of *The Scotsman* had two further articles on the 3rd of February and again on the 21st of February (83) with the heading "Principals seek closer ties"; he affirmed that, while rejecting the idea of a breakaway, the eight universities are keen to be part of any future review of higher education. "While the body (STEAC) appears to be weak in not having a financial remit, it could be attractive to the universities because of its purely advisory role."

The universities' strategy was two-fold: to seek to establish a Scottish sub-committee of the UGC which would enable the views of Scottish universities to be represented in discussions taking place in Scotland, and secondly, as a form of insurance, to seek to encourage collaboration between the universities and their partners on the other side of the binary line in the different localities of Scotland.

These two strands were pursued in discussions with the Scottish Office and in discussion with the UGC. Williams wrote to the Secretary of State for Scotland setting out the universities' proposals and concluded: "I feel sure that you will wish to know of the steps being taken by universities in a bid to help shape a strategy for higher education in Scotland which will be at least as effective as any which may emerge in other parts of the UK." (84) There was a further opportunity for lobbying in the "working dinner" between the principals and the Secretary of State on 24 February 1984. To follow up that meeting, Williams subsequently wrote to the Secretary of State referring to recent moves by the Scottish universities to establish formal links with other institutions of higher education in Scotland as a parallel exercise to that now being conducted in England through the UGC and the NAB. He reminded the Secretary of State that the Standing Committee of the Universities (ie the principals of the universities) had also recommended that

universities pursue closer association and co-operation with other institutions of higher education in their locality. He went on, "I am pleased to see that here in the west of Scotland we recently had a working dinner with all the principals and secretaries, apart from Craigie and St Andrew's, who were not invited as a result of an oversight."

Having sought to keep the Scottish Office informed of their intentions the universities then began to press their case with the UGC. On 27 March 1984 Williams wrote to Swinnerton-Dyer, the Chairman of the UGC, informing him of the arrangements that the Scottish universities were making and inviting him to set up a Scottish sub-committee. Swinnerton-Dyer replied to the effect that the UGC had always tried to take account of "the special features of Scotland" and that he had repeatedly suggested to various Scottish principals "that the eight of you should seek a meeting with the UGC as part of the current strategy exercise and I am sorry that the suggestion has not so far been taken up". (85) He expressed puzzlement as to the precise function of a Scottish sub-committee of the UGC.

Williams replied at greater length on 4 May 1984 outlining a possible composition and remit of a Scottish sub-committee. It would "keep under review the scope for rationalisation and co-operation among the universities of Scotland and, with the STEAC and SED, between the universities and other institutions of HE in Scotland". (86) He elaborated on some of the reasons for a separate Scottish organisation: the uniqueness of the Scottish secondary education system; the high percentage of university students who live at home; the prevalence of the four-year honours degree; the special course structure leading to the Scottish MA degree; and the funding by the SED of university students domiciled in Scotland. In summary, he said, "I foresee the Scottish sub-committee performing the work in Scotland which the main committee of the UGC will be undertaking with the NAB in England".

By the time of Swinnerton-Dyer's reply to that letter (dated June 1984) the terms of reference of STEAC had been extended. However, the fears of the universities clearly persisted well into June of that year. The Secretary of the Department's note of the meeting of the UGC dated 7 June 1984 referred to the possible development of a Scottish sub-committee of the UGC. It stated: "There appears strong though not wholly unanimous pressure for the creation of such a committee. The main case is that in many matters the Scottish universities need separate consideration because they are integrated with the Scottish schools curriculum, which is very different from that in the rest of the UK. The principals are all concerned at the continuing devolutionist pressure for a Scottish UGC - a development to which the principals would be opposed - seeing a Scottish sub-committee of the UGC as the best way to relieve that pressure." (87)

Swinnerton-Dyer's determination not to acquiesce in the request for a Scottish committee undoubtedly made it more attractive for the universities to seek an involvement in the STEAC discussions. Fortunately, the Scottish Office was already laying the ground for transbinary discussions. The Scottish Office file shows that two discussions with individual principals took place on transbinary initiatives in their areas. A further indication of the lively interest of the Scottish Office in transbinary initiatives is evidenced in correspondence between the Secretary and a senior civil servant at the DES. In a letter to the Secretary, the DES official referred to their recent conversation and included copies of three papers, one entitled "A Polytechnic University" by the new President of Portsmouth Polytechnic, Dr Law, the second, "Freeing the Polytechnics", a submission to the Lindop enquiry on degree-awarding powers for polytechnics, and the third a minute of a meeting held on 12 January 1984, chaired by Mr Thomson of the DES, between the City of London Polytechnic and the City University, at which the matter for discussion was the merger between the two institutions. These

developments clearly indicate that, while the universities were anxiously considering their position, there was growing recognition in the Department of the importance of establishing links across the binary line.

Some developments outwith the Scottish Office reinforced that changing culture. The institutions of higher education in the east of Scotland had been meeting informally for some eighteen months to discuss matters of mutual interest. The body was officially designated as the Principals of East of Scotland Tertiary Sector (PESTS), an acronym supplied by the Principal of Stirling University, Sir Kenneth Alexander. At its meeting on 22 March 1984, Alexander disclosed that discussions were taking place between Stirling University and Paisley College of Technology, and that "a total of eight working parties were having exploratory talks in their own areas of interest between the two institutions", although Turmeau of Napier expressed reservations about such transbinary discussions, believing that "much healthy competition might be lost if validation by universities existed". That interest in transbinary discussions was evidenced also in a submission from the Committee of Principals and Directors of Central Institutions (COPADOCI) to the Department against a meeting they had planned to have with the Minister, Allan Stewart (in February 1984) which encouraged transbinary approaches and encouraged the Minister to modify the remit of STEAC in such a way as to enable transbinary discussions to take place.

The reasons, therefore, for the extension of the terms of reference of the STEAC are clear: the projected decline in the demand for higher education created problems for all of higher education; the proposal for an institutional merger in Aberdeen required a response which, after prolonged discussion, ministers made by accepting the need for a national review of the relationship between universities and the rest of tertiary education; an initiation of a review of higher education south of the border marginalised the Scottish universities and forced them to seek a role in

higher education in Scotland; these discussions in turn encouraged a change of climate within the Department and more widely in higher education in Scotland. The answer to the concerns of the universities was to include them in STEAC by the simple device of modifying the terms of reference. In a sense, the Department's response to the lobbying from the universities could not have been more apt. Given that the universities perceived themselves to be excluded from discussions south of the border, it was reasonable to include them in the discussion that was due to take place in Scotland and to give them the assurance that they would be represented at principal level in the STEAC. In that way, they would be fully involved in the comprehensive planning of higher education in Scotland.

An Insider Account

That interpretation of the reasons for the extension of the STEAC terms of reference is confirmed by an "insider" perspective. Two accounts of the development of STEAC are provided by the SED files. The first of these (88) was a response to a request from a senior member of the Department for a report on "what SED would like to see emerging from STEAC in terms of organisation or structure and finance". The report generated in response to that request established a clear connection between CTES and STEAC. It explained why the CTES recommendations could not be accepted: local authorities were strongly opposed to direct funding of tertiary education and, in any event, all of the functions that were to be attributed to the new funding body "could all be exercised already by SED". Nevertheless, there would have been advantage in retaining a non-executive body to advise the Secretary of State on the needs of non-university tertiary education. Early in 1984, two developments - the DES review and the Aberdeen University merger proposal - "made it desirable to give further thought to the prospective role of STEAC". There were several factors which made an extension of role attractive. First, with the DES review now under way, the non-university sector in Scotland was the only part of higher education within Great Britain which was not under

review and "presentationally this would be difficult to defend". Moreover, the opportunity was now available to achieve what had been impracticable under the remit of CTES, which was, for the first time, a review that covered the whole of higher education in Scotland. Such a general review would be an altogether more appropriate way of responding to the Aberdeen University proposal than a "purely local enquiry". It created "an unrivalled chance to see the question in the round".

The second insider report (89) was developed in connection with the briefing of the Secretary of the Department for his pending meeting with the PAC on 26 June 1985. Part of that preparation involved rehearsing arguments against a number of hypothetical lines of questioning by the PAC and a series of reports were submitted to the Secretary in June, the last of them dated 21 June, only five days before the crucial encounter. The Secretary was encouraged that he "need not feel defensive about the CTES/STEAC relationship" since the decision to establish STEAC as a non-university sector tertiary advisory body was consistent with the CTES recommendations. Indeed, STEAC was seen as "very much a mark II CTES". However, that had to be amended in response to the DES strategy reviews and the Aberdeen University merger proposal. The second report is very much concerned to defend the Department against the claim that it welcomed the STEAC as an excuse for inaction on the college of education problem. It reads

"Once STEAC was established it would, however, have been unreasonable to pursue major changes in any one of the sectors which its enquiry would cover. I have no doubt that the STEAC does delay action on the colleges of education but the wish to delay such action was not why STEAC was set up. Far from it, and we should have no hesitation in making that clear to PAC."

The second report had two reasons for extending the remit of STEAC to include the universities. It referred to the way in which the exclusion of the universities from CTES had been widely criticised: "that criticism was fair", on the grounds that separate administration and funding arrangements for the universities and the public sector in Scotland make planning of the whole of higher education extremely difficult. It went on: "The extension of STEAC's remit to the universities was therefore a very significant step forward in Scottish education. Given the far-reaching nature of its task, a major reorganisation of any one of the sectors covered by the review would have pre-empted and would still seriously pre-empt its findings." While the case for involving the universities in the review was clearly welcomed by the Department, it was nevertheless bound to involve a delay in resolving the college of education problem. However, it is reasonable to conclude that that delay would have been welcomed. Nevertheless, the insider accounts, which establish a clear connection between the CTES, the college of education problem, the merger proposal from Aberdeen, and the DES review, confirm the analysis advanced to explain the establishment of STEAC and its changed terms of reference.

The Establishment of the Committee

The length of the period between the announcement on the establishment of STEAC in July 1983 and the announcement of its terms of reference in June 1984 is largely explained by the uncertainties that were created by the need to modify the terms of reference of the new Council. That would have taken a significant amount of discussion with the DES, with the Treasury, and even with 10 Downing Street. Another factor which lengthened the interval was the difficulty in identifying an appropriate chairman. In due course, the Secretary of State was able to announce that the Chairman would be Donald McCallum, Director of Ferranti, and the holder of several other public appointments in Scotland. That decision was intimated in a written answer on 5 June 1984. The choice of an industrialist was widely held to

be a way of ensuring that there would be a degree of independent refereeing of the three separate sectors. McCallum was a Deputy Lieutenant of the City of Edinburgh, a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical Engineers, a Companion of the British Institute of Management, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, as well as being a member of a range of other bodies. However, his own explanation for being selected was that he had regularly written to SED about the shortage of electronics graduates and the Department had responded by giving him the opportunity to remedy matters. (90)

In any event, an announcement was finally made in July 1984 that the terms of reference of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council would be as follows:

"To consider and report on the future strategy for higher education in Scotland, including the arrangements for providing institutions with financial support and the general principles which should govern relationships between universities and other institutions; to advise the Secretary of State on such other matters as he may remit to the Council; and to collaborate as necessary with the University Grants Committee, the National Advisory Bodies for local authority higher education in England and Wales, the Manpower Services Commission and other appropriate bodies."

The membership, which was not completed until 23 July, combined higher education with business and commercial interests: Tom Bone (Jordanhill), Harry Cuming (Dundee College of Technology), Ethel Gray (formerly Craigie College), Sir Alwyn Williams (University of Glasgow), and Brian Gowenlock (Heriot-Watt University, as observer from the UGC) were from the world of higher education, while Donald McCallum, Norman Biggart, Aubrey Harper,

Duncan MacLeod, and Allan Smith were drawn from the world of business and commerce. Ian Wilson and Hugh Smith were assessors from the SED.

The public response to the appointment of the committee was mixed. *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland* welcomed the appointment of a man "whose experience in industry will be an advantage" since, although he was a member of the Heriot-Watt University Court "he owes allegiance to no educational institution and to neither side of the divide between universities and colleges in the public sector". (91) The Principal of Aberdeen, George McNicol, also welcomed the establishment of the committee, believing that "the Aberdeen initiative might find parallels elsewhere in Scotland". (92)

However, not everyone was as positive. The three major academic unions - the Association of Lecturers in Colleges of Education in Scotland (ALCES), the Association of Lecturers in Scottish Central Institutions (ALSCI), and the Association of University Teachers (AUT) - received the news with some concern. The Secretary of ALSCI, Jack Dale, said, "The membership of STEAC is entirely nominated by the Secretary of State for Scotland and there is no guarantee it will be representative. It has no financial remit whatsoever." (93) That criticism failed to grasp that the function of STEAC was rather different from that ascribed to NAB. The AUT expressed the view that, if the STEAC was to be able to conduct a thorough examination of higher education in Scotland, the experience of that association "as the professional body representing academic and academic-related staff should be taken into account" and went on to express the hope that the universities would not be represented "at principal level." (94) For its part, the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC) condemned the limited powers and narrow membership of the STEAC. (95) It claimed that the membership of the committee "perpetuates elitism and its advisory role subordinates it to the authoritarianism of the Scottish Education Department". It went on to urge

George Younger to take urgent steps to broaden the composition of STEAC to include trade union representatives.

Echoing that theme, John Pollock of the EIS maintained that "one of the most worrying and appalling things about this government is that it really believes such a group can be balanced and impartial. Its attitude is that objectivity comes only from management, not from the workers' side." (96) The same point was made by Alan Smart, President of the NUS Scotland, who claimed, "If they claim background doesn't matter, why not appoint an impartial trade unionist? The fact is nobody comes to a job without their own beliefs. There are many areas where we feel union views are important, especially on vocational education and training." (97) John Pollock also criticised STEAC for its elitist bias in neglecting the whole area of non-advanced further education. The industrial bias of the committee was emphasised by drawing attention to the industrial and commercial background of Harper (Nobel Explosives), Biggart (former President of the Law Society for Scotland) and MacLeod (a partner in a Glasgow firm of chartered accountants). It was precisely that kind of imbalance which led The Scotsman to use the headline "Bias claim in colleges review", complaining that only four of the nine members of the Council were from the world of education. (98)

Livingstone of ALCES called it "an establishment group set up by a government with a narrow view of education as an investment rather than considering an individual's right to education". (99) In the same newspaper, Pollock referred to Bone, Williams and Gray as "absolutely outstanding", but Livingstone claimed that these people were all very busy and wondered how on earth they could find time to carry out their Council duties effectively. Pollock concluded: "It is absolutely appalling that the government is so naive about the whole question of industrial relations and matters relating to education that it thinks this is an unbiased group. It contains not a single trade unionist and not even a director of education." (100) The

government's reply to these charges was reported in *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland* in these words: "The experience (of members) in different areas of education, in industry, commerce and public affairs, will enable the Council to give due consideration to academic priorities, the requirements of employers, and the interests of the tax-payer." (101)

Understandably enough, the redefinition of the terms of reference of STEAC brought to a conclusion the correspondence between Sir Alwyn Williams and Swinnerton-Dyer of the UGC. Williams had been told that, with the establishment of STEAC, the UGC was not willing at present to set up the body proposed by the Scottish principals. Sir Alwyn is reported to have said that "the UGC wants to see the shape, colour and responsibilities of STEAC after the dust has settled before it decides for or against a Scottish sub-committee. He would not be surprised if STEAC was to assume the responsibility of the NAB in Scotland. If that were the case, there would be no need for a Scottish sub-committee, or the need for a Scottish sub-committee would diminish." (102) The precise wording of the letter was to the effect that the UGC was reluctant "to take an irrevocable step at a time when the situation is so fluid and unclear". The letter acknowledged the need for a good working relationship across the binary line in Scotland as in the rest of the United Kingdom, "but how it is implemented will depend very much on the purpose and mode of functioning of STEAC". (103) The enlargement of the terms of reference of STEAC to include the universities gave those institutions precisely the locus in the discussions that the 1983 review of higher education in England and the original formulation of the terms of reference of STEAC had appeared to rule out.

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CHAPTER 3 WRITTEN AND ORAL EVIDENCE

Introduction

A national body such as STEAC was under an obligation to ensure that it canvassed opinion widely. It needed to know how opinion in the educational community was structured, but it also needed to consult in order to ensure that its own thinking was informed by the best available insights in the educational and wider community. In line with that established practice, therefore, at its first meeting on 1 August 1984, the Council agreed to consult widely on its terms of reference and on 20 August 1984 the Secretary wrote to institutions as well as to the press inviting views on the issues facing the Council. Responses were sought by 31 October 1984. However, that deadline was subsequently modified in response to representations to the later date of 16 November 1984.

185 replies were received in the following categories:

Universities and related bodies:		34
Central institutions:		18
Colleges of education:		8
Further education:		6
Professional bodies:		30
Industry and commerce:		8
National educational bodies:		
national agencies:	15)	
regions:	7)	22
Other national bodies:		
agencies:	6)	
heritage bodies:	7)	13
Unions:		13
Individuals:		33
	Total	185

Respondents were invited to structure their observations under the following headings:

- "(i) the future demand for places in higher education in Scotland from different groups of entrants, including school-leavers, mature students, and those with vocational experience who require further professional education; and the implications of projected demand for higher education provision in Scotland;
- (ii) the principles which should govern relations between universities and other institutions and the roles of the different sectors of higher education in meeting demand for places;
- (iii) the arrangements by which public funds are distributed to higher education establishments in Scotland;
- (iv) the way in which higher education in Scotland is organised;
- (v) the arrangements for academic planning and co-ordination of higher education in Scotland;
- (vi) priorities for Scottish higher education, taking account of the aspirations of students of all ages, the requirements of employers, and the interests of the tax-payer;
- (vii) the consequences of the impact of new technology on the requirements of employers and professions and its effect on the relevance and general content of higher education courses." (1)

Not all of these areas listed for consideration have the same importance for this study. The first, while undoubtedly complex, produced minimum disagreement. The evidence clearly pointed to a reduction in the size of the relevant age group over the following decade and almost without exception respondents advocated an extension of participation in higher education for the benefit of individuals and of society itself. Areas (vi) and (vii), while clearly related to future strategy for higher education, attracted little comment. The overwhelming thrust of the evidence submitted and of the Council's deliberations was centred on (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v). The wording used by the Council is clearly ambiguous and duplicative. In essence, there were four interrelated issues:

What are the roles of the main providers of higher education?

How do these interrelate?

How might higher education in Scotland, in the light of answers given to the above, be more coherently organised and planned?

What is the most appropriate means of distributing funds to the institutions?

The evidence submitted will be analysed to determine the level of support for particular answers to these questions provided by the main interest groups.

While the 185 submissions constitute a formidable body of critical analysis of higher education, not all of the submissions addressed the four key areas identified. For instance, many of the submissions from national bodies were content to provide a statement of the importance of the area of educational provision they represented. For example, the Scottish Council for Research in Education drew attention to its importance as Scotland's national research establishment; the Scottish Examination Board to its interest in the certification system on which entry to higher education was largely based; the Open University, astutely avoiding taking sides in the debate, affirmed its role "not as a competitor to other institutions

or as an alternative but as a complementary source of higher education. At the moment our activities and their possible application in other sectors are not systematically recognised, though they could be a major and cost-effective factor in the development of future strategies." (2)

No criticism is intended of these submissions: the institutions concerned were responding to the issues identified in the letter of invitation to submit evidence. However, it is perhaps regrettable that a body like the Scottish Council for the Validation of Courses for Teachers (SCOVACT), which had established itself as a vital bridging mechanism between the colleges of education and the universities - a matter of vital importance to the Council - should have contented itself with an account of its establishment. Even more regrettable was the silence of the GTC, which maintained its policy of non-engagement in educational debates, a policy that was continued until the appointment of the present Registrar in 1985. As a consequence of their non-involvement in the debate, some eleven of the submissions from national bodies had to be discounted in the analysis, as well as fourteen of the thirty submissions from professional bodies, some of which simply took advantage of the invitation to submit evidence to affirm their existence, while others focused on specific issues such as the entry qualifications for admission to Glasgow College of Technology by the General Optical Council.

The Universities

The most striking feature of the university evidence was the degree of unanimity expressed by the institutions, individually and collectively, and their supporters. It was to be expected that, given their influential position in Scotland, the eight universities and the bodies which speak collectively on their behalf - the Standing Committee of Scottish Universities (SCSU) and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) - should present a formal display of unity in defence of their position. That position was reinforced by submissions from sub-groups within the

university system - individual departments or groups of staff, and by some nineteen submissions by individuals, who identified themselves as having or having had a university connection. In addition, some of the professional bodies and learned societies - the British Academy, the Royal Society, the Royal Society of Edinburgh - lent their considerable support to the universities' cause. What then were the principal features of the universities' case?

According to the SCSU, whose Executive Committee was formed by the Principals themselves, universities were distinctive institutions with a distinctive role to perform. Whereas other institutions of higher education were primarily committed to teaching and, as the background paper accompanying the request for evidence put it, "undertake research to support teaching" (3) for universities, on the other hand, "the most distinctive feature must be their research capabilities and obligations". (4) To be sure, teaching was a "prime function" of the universities, but they needed to be recognised as the "principal providers of postgraduate education and, in particular, of research training". (5) It was this feature of their work that enabled the universities to make the kind of contribution they did to national life. Not only did they produce most of the graduates for the major professions, but they also undertook most of the country's basic research. It was essential, therefore, if the universities were to continue as members of "an international community of qualified men and women" (6), that they should continue to operate under the aegis of and be funded by the UGC. Not the least important feature of the existing funding arrangements was the "dual support" principle: universities attracted funding for research through the Research Councils on the one hand but, on the other, received grant from the UGC, which acknowledged that research was "a contractual requirement for academic staff" (7) and therefore had to be supported by an appropriate infrastructure of facilities and equipment. The submissions insisted that the existing arrangements, relying as they did on external peer review, were so intimately bound up with the UK system

that it would be retrograde and counter-productive to attempt to disentangle them. Moreover, to seek to replicate that system in the smaller educational entity of Scotland would be impossible: the country was simply too small to generate the range of expertise across all disciplines necessary for effective peer review.

The submissions from the universities acknowledged that the non-university sector had an important contribution to make to higher education. They noted, with concern, that since 1980, while university numbers had been pegged, those in central institutions had increased by 50%. Without condoning that kind of discrimination in funding, the submissions acknowledged that "sensible complementarity between the sectors" (8) was essential. However, aware that complementarity implied a degree of co-ordination and joint planning, the universities proposed that the informal annual discussion with the SED should be put on a more systematic basis and recommended the establishment of a Scottish Sub-Committee of the UGC. As was noted in chapter 2, the request for such a committee had been made in 1983 but Swinnerton-Dyer, Chairman of the UGC, had rejected the request in June 1984 by expressing reluctance "to take an irrevocable step at a time when the position is so fluid and unclear". (9) It was understandable that the universities should now repeat the request, viewing the sub-committee as a mechanism for reflecting the views of the Scottish universities. The sub-committee, STEAC itself, and the Standing Committee of Universities could provide an arena for dialogue on higher education in Scotland and a way in which improved co-ordination among the sectors is achieved.

In their individual submissions the universities provided minor variations on the central themes authoritatively adumbrated by the Standing Committee. Dundee and St Andrews Universities were content to affirm their commitment to the principles set out by the Standing Committee, except that St Andrews University, significantly, claimed that one of the ill-effects of separating Scottish universities

from their British counterparts might be that "their appeal to students furth of Scotland might be reduced". (10) The remaining universities offered an individual gloss. For example, Heriot-Watt maintained that research was merely "a supportive activity" in the non-university institutions but "a core activity" (11) in the universities; Edinburgh, protecting the universities' research role, defended the differential funding of universities and non-universities by emphasising the "dual" role of universities, not simply to teach but also to research. It argued against withdrawal from the UK system since that would require the establishment of "expensive duplication of administrative machinery". (12) Finally, in the most aggressively worded and longest submission, the University of Aberdeen maintained that universities exist to attract "the higher academic achievers" and considered that to separate Scottish universities from the UK system would lead to "diverging terms and conditions of service which would be gravely detrimental" (13) and would discourage able staff to cross the border from England. Furthermore, if Scottish universities were to be repatriated, the Scottish medical schools would be forced to deal only with Scottish needs with the result that two medical schools would need to close and be reopened, expensively, south of the border. Finally, the Aberdeen submission ended with a plea for the union of Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology and Aberdeen College of Education with the University.

With regard to a mechanism for co-ordination, all universities except one expressed support for a Scottish sub-committee of the UGC or a variant of it. The University of Strathclyde's submission differed sharply in this respect. Taking as its starting point the principle that "distinctions between degree-level provision in the university sector and the public sector have become unnecessary and unreal" (14), it went on to argue for a Scottish UGC, which would distribute funds allocated by the SED and constitute "a single forum" for planning all of higher education in Scotland. Such an arrangement would abolish the distinction between the autonomous and

public sectors. "As a result, esteem would then depend upon the degree of success an institution achieved in pursuing its stated objectives - its efficiency - and less upon a real or imagined hierarchy of academic standing which continues to invite academic drift towards a single ideal, instead of the diversity of institutes and diversity of functions which we believe would benefit the country." (15)

The submissions from individual universities received strong support from the emphatic stance of the collective bodies. The CVCP affirmed its belief "that the full participation of the Scottish universities in the university system of the UK is of mutual benefit to them and to their sister institutions and that the UGC is the most appropriate and efficient planning instrument for the development of the universities" (16), and reminded the Council of its submission to the government's devolution paper in the mid-70s to the effect that it was "in the best interests of the UK if there would be no devolution of the responsibility for the universities". (17) In similar vein, the UGC argued that a Scottish UGC would be a "serious disadvantage" to the Scottish universities. (18)

The various learned societies took the same strong line. The Royal Society maintained that universities and central institutions had "different educational traditions and correspondingly different resources of manpower and equipment: their funding requirements are not identical." Accordingly, "Scottish universities should be seen as integral parts of the UK and, indeed, international university communities". (19) For its part, the Royal Society of Edinburgh claimed that "there is a fairly definite distinction to be maintained between universities and the non-university sector" with the universities concerned with "research of a fundamental character, with teaching at the highest levels and with training for certain professions". (20) And finally, the British Academy, again reflecting the strength of the university lobby, argued against "radical restructuring, especially as the three-fold division into universities, centrally-funded colleges, and further

education colleges does give rise to significant differences in function", (21) although these were not elaborated. Like the Royal Society and the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the BA saw no point in a Scottish UGC since any alteration to the status quo "might jeopardise research funding". (22) The only discordant note in these and similar submissions was struck by the evidence from the Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC), the only Research Council to respond to the Committee's request for evidence. In relation to the deep concern about research funding expressed by the universities and its possible disappearance with repatriation, the SERC insisted that "Scottish institutions contend for research grants and training awards on a footing indistinguishable from their English, Welsh and Northern Irish counterparts". (23)

Support for the university position was found in the evidence submitted by other groups but sometimes alongside evidence that was strongly critical of existing arrangements. For example, bodies such as the British Institute of Management, the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the Law Society of Scotland, and the Faculty of Actuaries, all accepted the appropriateness of the distinction between universities and other sectors, and all argued for the retention of the existing funding arrangements.

The submissions from individuals reflected a variety of views. Professor Norman Gash of St Andrews claimed that "The tendency observable in the higher echelons of the colleges to transform them into more academic institutions merely spoils good colleges without producing anything recognisable as a university, of which there are enough in Scotland." (24) Professor G A Lodge, Principal of the North of Scotland College of Agriculture, and Professor at the University of Aberdeen, defended the UGC system, while recognising degrees of suspicion between University and College of Agriculture staff. (25) Dr G P Wright of Dundee was strongly critical of the UGC "in view

of what happened at Aberdeen, Stirling and Heriot-Watt". (26) He criticised its "undue secretiveness" and its "deferential attitude" to the Secretary of State. Nevertheless, it should still continue to allocate public funds to universities. He also believed that CIs should maintain their separate identity with their "special emphasis on applied-ness (sic) and practicality", while still having to guard against becoming "dumping grounds for less qualified students". (27) Professor R M S Smellie of Glasgow University and Professor D A Dunn of Stirling made similar points, as well as Dr C W Davidson from Edinburgh. A distinctive submission was provided by Robert Hunter, formerly Lecturer in Law at Aberdeen and a former Chairman of the Board of Governors of RGIT. He argued for the fusing of undergraduate programmes at Aberdeen University, RGIT and Aberdeen College of Education, which would become the responsibility of RGIT and would be funded by the SED, and all postgraduate programmes and research would be the responsibility of the University funded by the UGC.

However, several submissions argued against the university point of view. For example, the General Council of Edinburgh University argued for "a single national organisation to co-ordinate higher education and to eliminate duplication". (28) And, the Scottish Universities' Physical Education Association made a plea for co-operation between universities, central institutions, and colleges of education in the area of sports science and sports studies through "area organisations with a view to identifying existing resources and efficiencies". (29)

The most vigorous of the statements opposing the university view came from Dr Graham Hills, Principal of Strathclyde University: "I believe the binary division no longer serves a useful purpose. It perpetuates unnecessary divisiveness; it encourages academic drift and, in doing so, does harm to the technological base of this country." (30) The way to achieve "parity of esteem," he claimed, was to designate all relevant institutions as universities to be funded by a

Scottish grant-awarding body. Professor Duncan Timms, Depute Principal at Stirling University and a governor at Moray House College of Education, argued that "the binary line separating the autonomous university sector from the diverse public sector of central institutions and colleges of education bears little relationship to the diversity of practices and traditions which exist on both sides of the division. The existence of the line is a hindrance to sensible planning" (31), and called for a "single national board for higher education". In similar vein, Professor Nigel Grant of the Chair of Education at Glasgow University bemoaned the fragmentation of the system, especially at a time when resources were shrinking. He regretted the isolation of the universities from the rest of the educational system in Scotland, which set up a hierarchy of institutions that did not respond to existing needs. He urged the placing of all higher education under a national body (not the SED) and set out options for non-university institutions to associate themselves with universities. That position was supported by Dr Henry Cowper of the OU, who argued for grouping central institutions within the university sector to avoid needless duplication of resources, with a single agency, perhaps a Scottish UGC, to distribute funds. Finally, university staff and student unions took contrasting approaches on the funding issue. While the AUT (Scotland), reflecting the stance of the UK body, supported the establishment of a Scottish sub-committee of a more widely representative UGC, all four of the student associations which submitted evidence expressed hostility to the UGC and called for a Scottish body to co-ordinate planning on a national basis. (32)

Central Institutions (CIs)

The evidence from the central institutions was not as voluminous as that on behalf of the universities but it was, nevertheless, extremely pointed and forceful. The collective view was articulated by COPADO CI. Having asserted that the CIs' mission was "to provide vocational courses at higher education level, serving the needs of industry, commerce and the professions", (33) the COPADO CI

submission went on to make three important claims. Firstly, it enunciated the principle of "like resources for like work". (34) The committee's response to differential funding was to insist on "a uniform system of norms governing the allocation of resources" (35) across the whole higher education sector in Scotland, thus establishing equitable arrangements for course costs, staff:student ratios, academic salaries and conditions of service, as well as facilities. Secondly, COPADOCI defended the entitlement of CIs to engage in research and to be funded for that activity. Thirdly, a single integrated system of higher education was advocated with the binary line being abolished to allow co-ordination and planning with funds dispensed by the SED.

The submissions from the individual CIs were remarkable for the unanimity they demonstrated on the question of equivalence of funding. All fourteen submissions emphasised the imperative necessity of this change. Inequalities of funding, it was argued, had serious marketing repercussions: the central institutions were regarded by school-leavers and others as "second-best", offering an inferior range of opportunities to those offered by the more liberally funded universities. Besides, the differential funding prejudiced the CIs' applications for research funding. Far from being second-best, they were defended as offering courses which were externally validated, unlike their counterparts at the universities. So deeply ingrained was the sense of injustice in the present arrangements that RGIT actually saw the defining characteristic of central institutions as "their ability to use resources economically". (36) Without question, what united the submissions was the conviction that, compared to universities, CIs were being under-funded: they were offering courses as academically sound and as vocationally relevant as those provided by the universities, if not more so, but were denied the resources necessary to ensure the highest quality. The RGIT submission encapsulated the view of the sector in these words:

"The effective and the efficient maintenance and implementation of academic standards in the non-university sector in Great Britain are inhibited by the long-standing inferior salary scales, the lower proportion of senior posts, and the generally lower standard of teaching accommodation and residential accommodation, equipment, research facilities, library facilities, and recreation and cultural facilities." (37)

If the CIs showed the same commitment to equality of funding and to funding for research, they were less unanimous in relation to the planning and funding arrangements. Eight of the fourteen institutions certainly favoured a system in which all HEIs in Scotland would be funded by the Scottish Office; three were ambiguous in their preference; Glasgow College of Technology and Napier College preferred a funding body other than the SED; and the Dundee College of Technology had no marked preference for SED or a separate body.

Notwithstanding the clear commitment to a single integrated system of HE, some interesting variations were supported. Not surprisingly, in view of their special constitutional position, vis-a-vis the universities, the Council of the Scottish Agricultural Colleges saw value in close association with universities, both with regard to "the common use of physical resources" and "the cultural advantages which flow to students by virtue of their membership of the larger student community of the university". (38) Interestingly, however, despite a commitment to a common system of funding, two of the "technological" CIs - Paisley and Napier - appeared to argue for a continuation of the binary system. The Napier submission maintained that "the two sectors should be maintained, providing the important ingredients of alternatives and competition which are required for healthy survival". (39)

For its part, Paisley College of Technology proposed a somewhat curious solution. It advocated the establishment of a small number of institutions, including Paisley, "which could be accorded charter status and equivalence of standing with the universities". (40) The submission went on: "This would give an opportunity to Scotland to have a few public sector institutions which were fully accountable to parliament through the Scottish Office and with a role distinctive from the present universities." (41) It was not made clear precisely in what ways the role would be distinctive; nor was it appreciated that, in a revised funding system, all higher education institutions would have the same constitutional relationship to the funding body and would all be "public" in the sense that they were recipients of public funds.

Finally, the Scottish College of Textiles, alone among the CIs, proposed that, within the new funding framework, there should be established a federation of central institutions and colleges of education "similar to that adopted for the university colleges in Wales". (42) Such a federation "would allow individual institutions to offer their unique educational programmes while providing an umbrella organisation to encourage and control the development of new courses". (43) It might be given a charter to award degrees. This development might help to "overcome the problem of identity" (44) experienced by the public higher education institutions in Scotland and raise their standing in the eyes of school-leavers and employers. It would also serve "to eliminate the inaccurate view that college degrees are in any way inferior to university degrees". (45)

Two national bodies, with which the CIs enjoyed a close association, submitted evidence which supported the general thrust of the CI evidence. The Committee of Directors of Polytechnics (CDP), of which the Directors of the five Scottish "technological" CIs were members, attacked the principle of differential funding, maintaining that, "identical functions should attract the same funding". (46)

However, the CDP went on to make the more radical suggestion that "there may be economic benefit in concentrating higher education in fewer strategically placed institutions". (47) That was followed by an elaboration of the "Big is better" thesis: large institutions were believed to "absorb changes better than small specialist institutions and larger multi-disciplinary institutions are more likely to be able to develop centres of excellence than smaller institutions and thereby assist in the maintenance of standards throughout the institution". (48) It is curious that such a view was expressed in the CDP submission but merited no mention in the submission from COPADOCI or those of the individual institutions. That is interpretable as a disinterested observation from those who presided over major amalgamations of separate specialist institutions south of the border; more menacingly, it may be perceived as a move by the heads of would-be polytechnics in Scotland to see instituted in Scotland the system well established by then in England.

The CNAA also had well developed links with the non-university sector in Scotland and it was not surprising to see that body affirming the importance of equity in funding, of research as an essential underpinning of all degree-level work, and of external validation, "one of the particular strengths of public sector higher education". (49) CNAA affirmed the need for a national body to plan higher education in Scotland. While that view had been confirmed by the Scottish Committee of CNAA, it had not yet been agreed by the Council of CNAA on the grounds that further discussion appeared to be required. CNAA's endorsement of research was striking. "Universities and institutions engaged in degree course work in the public sector cannot be distinguished on any ground of principle in their concern for research. Basic funding of public sector institutions should be at a level which enables them to compete for research grants and sponsor research on more equal terms with the university." (50)

In view of the claims made by the CIs about their responsiveness to the needs of industry and commerce, it was to be expected that the evidence from that source would support the CI case. That, indeed, occurred. Bodies like the Chartered Association of Certified Accountants, the Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, the Institute of Electrical Engineers, the Pharmaceutical Society, still bruised after the UGC's closure of Pharmacy at Heriot-Watt, all took a view that was supportive of the central institutions and demonstrated the existence of a CI network that was as resourceful as the university one. These professional bodies showed themselves to be strong supporters of the central institutions. For example, the Certified Accountants advocated "the same level of funding for similar courses, irrespective of the teaching institution". (51) The Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine made the same point, drawing attention to the fact that more generous funding allowed the universities to provide "better, more thorough, though more expensive opportunities". (52) It argued for funding on a national basis. The Chartered Society argued for "a more equitable system of funding" (53) administered by a single body, the Scottish Education Department. The Institute of Biology drew attention to the "apparently anomalous situations which arise in the levels of funding for almost identical courses in the biological sciences at different institutions": a "central body" would address such anomalies. (54) The Pharmaceutical Society considered it "anomalous" that the universities were the only sector of Scottish education "which is not associated with the Scottish Office in terms of planning and funding". (55) The Scottish Business Education Council was also wholeheartedly supportive and argued for "a unified system of funding and equality of provision in terms of buildings, equipment and staff salaries". (56)

However, not all of these bodies were as supportive as might have been expected. The Scottish Business Education Council castigated the CIs for attempting to "imitate" the universities. That theme was picked up by CBI Scotland and by such

other bodies as the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, the Scottish Council Development and Industry, and Chivas Brothers Limited. All of these bodies drew attention to the distinctiveness of the three sectors, sometimes in language that was not too flattering for the non-university institutions. Thus, CBI Scotland saw the universities as "the guardians of values, the custodians of our culture, and at the forefront of investigation, innovation and research"; (57) the CIs were seen as producing "the more high-grade technician". (58) The same categorisation was adopted by Chivas Brothers Limited which, unlike the CNAA, actually made reference to the role of the colleges of education, although it is not one that they might recognise: according to Chivas their task was "to shoulder the bulk of the upgrading needed for the general mass of people of working age". (59) However, what did unite all eight submissions from the business world was their belief in the need for a single national body or commission to plan and fund higher education in Scotland in a way that would reduce unnecessary duplication.

Colleges of Education

Eight submissions were received from the colleges of education, one from each of the seven colleges and an eighth from the former Vice-Principal of Moray House. While it is clear that the Committee of Principals agreed a collective submission (60) and that submission, which was prepared by the Chairman of the Committee, Peter McNaught of Craigie, is contained within the Committee of Principals files, STEAC did not list the Committee of Principals in its list of respondents and there is no trace of a submission in the official STEAC file. It nevertheless may be taken to present an accurate assessment of the views of the committee.

There was agreement that the status quo was unacceptable: higher education, in the view of one of the institutions, represented "an untidy and inadequately co-ordinated collection of institutions not consistently differentiated by function and standing in no obvious relationship to each other". (61) All seven institutions

affirmed their commitment to a single central planning and funding body, preferably not the SED, whose responsibility would be to create a properly co-ordinated system, one which, moreover, according to the Jordanhill submission, would be a "post-binary system" in which there would be parity of financial provision, accreditation procedures and staff contractual arrangements. Beyond that, disagreements emerged. Craigie and Jordanhill recommended that closer association be established with universities so that the colleges could become parts of extended faculties of education which would allow "intelligent rationalisation of resources" (62) and would allow the colleges, as part of a university system, to offer the full range of academic opportunities. Dunfermline College of Physical Education preferred to maintain its separate identity as a small but distinctive institution which, with its emphasis on recreation, sport and movement studies, "does not fit the present pattern in Scotland and should be allowed to grow into a sports institute similar to those on the continent". (63)

The other four institutions strongly affirmed the importance of the monotechnic principle without sharing the same view of future development. For example, Aberdeen College set out several options involving various types of relationship with other sectors before committing itself to "the maintenance of the present pluralist system". (64) It attached high value to the maintenance of close links with the teaching profession, with the education authorities, and with SED and concluded: "It is submitted that any reorganisation which diminished these functional links and substituted organisational links with some other institution within higher education which had its own priorities and imperatives could only damage Aberdeen College of Education's capacity to discharge its prime functions." (65)

The Moray House submission postulated three major options. The first involved regional mergers: all institutions within a close geographical proximity would

become a single major institution offering a comprehensive range of educational opportunities. However, it doubted whether such institutions "could demonstrate the responsiveness and flexibility or generate the professional commitment that a pluralist system can offer". (66) Besides, within the enlarged institution the work of colleges of education would be devalued "to the detriment of the professions they serve". (67) The second option involved the establishment in each region of two parallel institutions, the university on the one hand and a merger of non-university institutions on the other. This binary option was rejected because the college doubted whether "the distinction between public sector institutions and universities is any longer sustainable". (68) The third possibility, which Moray House supported, was the establishment of major federations within each region in which institutions retained their individual identity while engaging in close and continuing collaboration with their partners and offering a wide range of opportunities but within a planned national system. Interestingly, the submission from the former Vice-Principal of Moray House favoured the second option.

Regional Authorities

It is appropriate to consider the evidence from the regional authorities in this context since education is the most important of their responsibilities and close relationships had been established between them and the colleges of education. Disappointingly, only six of Scotland's twelve regional and island authorities submitted evidence, and four of these - Fife, Borders, Strathclyde, and Highland - contented themselves with pleas for further co-ordination of provision and centralisation of funding. There was a remarkable similarity between the remaining two submissions and those of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Association of Directors of Education in Scotland (ADES). Indeed, the wording of the ADES and Lothian submissions was identical, possibly because David Semple, Lothian's Director of Education, also served as Secretary of ADES. All four submissions agreed that all higher education institutions, other than universities, should be

brought under the control of regional and island authorities, thus bringing higher education locally into association with further education and integrating all post-16 educational provision in each area. The case for integrating the colleges of education was that they are "the principal customers of the authorities and the authorities are the principal employers of their product". (69) Lothian and ADES maintained that there was a pressing need for this kind of transfer in view of the declining student numbers in the colleges and they urged "a change of direction for these institutions". There is here an echo of the CTES debate discussed in Chapter 2: David Semple, in line with his note of reservation to the CTES, was making a further bid to place responsibility for non-HE with the regional authorities.

Teacher Unions

The various professional associations of teachers and staff in colleges of education and CIs supported the three principal features that have already been identified. First, there was a commitment to bringing all of higher education under central control and away from the UGC, either through the SED or an alternative planning and funding body or, as the EIS maintained, "within the ambit of an elected Scottish Assembly". (70) Secondly, these various bodies reinforced the existing tripartite division between institutions. The Headteachers' Association, the EIS, and ALCES strongly emphasised the distinctive contribution that was made by the colleges of education. According to the EIS, the significant features of the teacher education establishments was the mixture of students they accommodated; their emphasis on collaboration with schools; and their involvement in supporting in-service training and school staff development. The Scottish Secondary Teachers' Association (SSTA) saw the need for the college of education role to be expanded to provide further professional training and support for teachers throughout their careers. According to the headteachers, the colleges of education had "a unique function to perform in both pre-service and in-service training of teachers and in the links they have formed with schools". (71) In the view of

ALCES, "the college sector exists, works well and, though small, has a network and a geographical coverage of course insight that approaches a national system." (72) However, ALCES remained adamant that something had to be done about the coherence of the system: "Effectively, the universities operate outwith the rest of Scottish education." (73)

Further Education

The small number of submissions made on behalf of the further education sector argued a consistent line: they drew attention to the importance of local authority provision of higher education and considered that there were very considerable strengths in such a system, precisely because it was integrated with the educational provision in schools. EIS FE lecturers were adamant that the provision of higher education in the non-university sector should not be seen in terms of filling the gaps in university provision. Indeed, the difference between the two sectors was thought to lie in approach rather than in what academic disciplines were taught. The Scottish Further Education Association argued against "the artificial compartmentalisation into discrete sectors" (74) and believed that there was a strong need for regional tertiary education councils to integrate FE with other types of continuing education opportunities. For its part, the Association of the Principals of Colleges argued that inequalities of funding prevented a vigorous growth of higher education in the further education institutions. Finally, Daniel Hood, arguing on behalf of further education, maintained that, since there would be a continuing need for higher education outside the main cities, it was important to provide higher education in further education colleges. He suggested, however, that it would come under the control of neighbouring central institutions and be organised on a geographical basis. (75)

The Nationalist Emphasis

Several bodies argued extremely vigorously on grounds of Scotland's right to self-determination for a repatriation of the Scottish universities. For example, the Scottish National Party affirmed: "The universities can no longer be allowed to opt out of their responsibilities to the Scottish community by continuing to advance the argument that on the one hand they are Scottish institutions, but on the other they are British and international institutions, and therefore accorded a special position set apart from the rest of Scottish tertiary and higher education." (76) Similar arguments are made by heritage bodies such as the Advisory Council for the Arts in Scotland, the Scottish Poetry and Library Association, the Saltire Society, and the Heritage Society of Scotland. This last body recommended "the creation of an equivalent Scottish body to the UGC . . . which will enable our universities to be recognised more fully and discharge more effectively their primordial responsibility to the community of Scotland, as well as their undoubted duty to the international community of learning." (77)

Recapitulation

The analysis of the written evidence provides the following answers to the four questions posed at the outset of this chapter.

1. What are the roles of the main providers of higher education? The overwhelming consensus was that the four sectors have distinctive functions: universities exist to provide academic programmes and to conduct research; central institutions provide vocationally relevant programmes and should be encouraged and supported to undertake more research; they should also enjoy equity in funding; colleges of education have a distinctive contribution to make to the education of teachers and other professionals; and further education establishments not only provide HE opportunities outside the main cities but provide a ladder of educational

opportunities through the academic mix each sustains. On the basis of the evidence, then, there was overwhelming support for the existing division of responsibilities, even although these were not argued from first principles but appeared mainly as post-hoc rationalisations for the status quo.

2. How should these institutions interrelate? A few submissions urged a closer integration between the sectors, for example by making colleges of education form faculties of education in the universities, and there was even some support for federations of institutions. However, there was a clearly marked preference for the existing arrangements, provided that national planning mechanisms were in place.
3. How should higher education be co-ordinated and planned? Again, there was overwhelming recognition of the need for more careful planning and national co-ordination with two clear views emerging. On the one hand, the universities insisted on maintaining their links with the UGC but conceded that co-ordination should be developed by a Scottish sub-committee of the UGC, acting in consultation with a body which spoke on behalf of the non-university sector and with the SED. On the other hand, practically all of the submissions from other quarters argued for the repatriation of the Scottish universities, and for a national planning body that could assume responsibility for planning, and perhaps also funding, of all of higher education in Scotland.
4. Finally, what is the most appropriate mechanism for funding? Following directly from the response to question 3, there were two views: universities insisted on the need to continue funding by the UGC to enable them to secure their share of research funds and to continue as part of a UK system.

The rest of the submissions argued for a funding body based in Scotland, either the SED itself or some other authoritative body.

Oral Evidence

The Council invited oral evidence from the principals of Scotland's higher education institutions only. The university principals appeared before the Council in 10 May 1985, the thirteenth meeting of the Council. Prior to their appearance Alwyn Williams of Glasgow, the university principal on the Council, made it clear that the principals had met to discuss their oral evidence. He disclosed that "there were differences of opinion among the principals and these would not be disguised". (78) The Chairman made it clear that the Council was canvassing "the personal views of the principals".

On the central question of planning and funding of higher education in Scotland, a clear difference of view emerged: Sir Kenneth Alexander of Stirling and Graham Hills of Strathclyde took a different view from the other principals. For Alexander the need for change was not simply that the existing arrangements were inadequate, but also that there were positive arguments in favour of integrated higher education in Scotland. He indicated that his views remained as set out in his memorandum of 5 April 1982 to the House of Commons Select Committee on Education, Science and the Arts. There he was critical of the UGC on the grounds that there were "necessary limitations to the information it has to guide its decision-making"; it failed to consult individual universities on "its broad policy objectives and its specific decisions"; and it was unacceptable that the number of UK and EC students attending Scottish universities should be taken "by such an unrepresentative body so remote from democratic accountability". He proposed "a Scottish alternative" based on "the recognisably distinct elements in the Scottish education system at all levels" and on "the attraction of rationalising educational expenditure and provision so as to get a better educational return for a given

expenditure". He believed that the scale of the tertiary sector in Scotland made the success of such a rationalising approach more likely than if it were adopted on a UK level. (79)

Despite that commitment to "the establishment of machinery appropriate to the task of financing the tertiary sector in Scotland", Alexander was ambivalent on the UGC. He saw that body as a way of safeguarding the independence of the universities and therefore as a way of providing "a protective cover for creative and radical thinking". (80) However, he was also aware that the UGC on occasions "might be incompatible with a Scottish perception of needs". (81) He favoured the establishment of a national planning body which would "inevitably" lead to the funding of all of higher education by the Scottish Office. He even argued for a peer review system for Scotland alone and for allowing central institutions to take advantage of dual support arrangements for research.

Hills of Strathclyde was even more frank: separation of planning and funding was "foolish and unreal". He supported STEAC's advocacy of a single funding system for a single system of higher education, one that recognised the different functions of the sectors but attributed "parity of esteem to institutions". (82)

The other five principals - Burnett of Edinburgh, Watson of St Andrews, Johnston of Heriot-Watt, McNicol of Aberdeen and Neville of Dundee - were remarkably consistent in their rejection of a single planning and funding body for Scottish higher education institutions, but varied in the arguments they adduced to defend that rejection. Watson maintained that repatriation would "imperil" the universities' links with the research councils and would deprive them of the benefits of having students from other parts of the UK. Burnett claimed that a single body "might risk losing the balance between degree and sub-degree provision". (83) He was arguing here against "academic drift", when institutions of higher education "pretend to be

universities", a problem that had so far not materialised in Scotland, thanks to the vigilance of the SED. McNicol emphasised the universities' role as "the springboard of technological change", the generator of "the wealth that supports a civilised society"; he supported Watson on the possible loss of students from other parts of the UK, especially in medicine, where Scotland already had a disproportionate share of students. (84) Moreover, a further consequence of moving the universities "from the collective strengths of the UK system" would be that industrial links formed across the UK would be weakened. Johnston of Heriot-Watt maintained that any change "would attract undesirable attention from the Treasury". (85)

That point was more fully developed by Neville. (86) He, too, acknowledged Scotland's "disproportionately high expenditure on education". Where that occurred - particularly in medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine - it allowed Scotland to provide a service to the rest of the UK. However, that did not represent his central position. In a quite explicit assertion of self-interest, Neville maintained that a single planning and funding body was to be opposed because the universities would be in a minority in a body covering all Scottish higher education. It would be a body consisting of "unequal partners" and the university interest could not be protected. For broadly similar reasons, Neville opposed access by CIs to the research councils, although here his opposition was based on the rationalisation that "central institution staff had not been chosen for their capability to do research". (87) Moreover, the case for excluding central institutions from this work was strengthened by the threat of increased selectivity in the distribution of research funds on a UK basis.

The commitment of the universities to the status quo did not blind the principals to some of its shortcomings. Without exception, they saw the need for a greater degree of joint planning. Neville admitted that a body might be established which

"determined needs and co-ordinated higher education in Scotland". McNicol, openly acknowledging "the overlapping provision in engineering" between the university and Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology in Aberdeen, argued for "a co-ordinating body which could take an overview of innovations". He did emphasise, however, that what was wanted was "co-ordination not integration". (88) Burnett considered that his experience of working with the Principals of East of Scotland Tertiary Sector (PESTS), convinced him that "there was a lack of mutual understanding between the sectors". He sought minimal change - "a genuine vehicle for exchange between the sectors to assess needs and advise the funding bodies". It was strange, given the weight of evidence from the universities in favour of a Scottish Sub-Committee of the UGC, that the Council did not press the principals on the precise ways in which co-ordination between the sectors would be achieved.

In all important respects, then, the oral evidence of the principals provided valuable confirmation of the written evidence. It did help to reveal that the university position was not monolithically committed to the status quo; it showed that certainly two of the principals favoured repatriation; it affirmed the commitment of the universities as a whole to the UGC connection, and it demonstrated the universities' awareness of the need for an improvement in the planning of higher education. Perhaps most interestingly, the oral evidence exposed in a way that the written evidence did not that the principals' position was motivated largely by a concern to protect the privileged position of the universities.

The letter from the Council inviting the central institutions to submit oral evidence sought the views of these institutions on four matters: teaching, research, the relationship between the institutions, and the notion of a joint planning and funding body for all of higher education in Scotland. The central institutions provided a brief note in response to each of these, drafted by their secretary, Claudia Morgan

of Queen Margaret College. The oral evidence, which was heard by the Council on 29 July 1985, concentrated on these four matters. All of the principals attended, except Howie of Paisley, Furniss of the Scottish College of Textiles, and the principals of the three agricultural colleges.

With regard to teaching, the principals expressed themselves content with their "traditional role as providers of professional/vocational higher education". (89) All acknowledged the importance of an appropriate mix of degree and non-degree work, and no-one expressed disagreement with Williams's comment on the desirability of avoiding "academic drift", a phrase that, at that time, was a coded way of denying the aspirations of non-university institutions. Kennedy of RGIT acknowledged the distinction but maintained that there were "diploma courses which could appropriately be broadened to reach degree level". (90) The control of such developments lay in "academic validation" by the CNAA, a subtle reminder to Williams and others that the central institutions were well practised in the course validation and review system sponsored by the CNAA and involving strong externality of scrutiny of an institution's work.

The oral evidence also explored the principals' stance on research in CIs. It was clear that the Council was extremely supportive of the CIs' role in research. In the discussion immediately preceding the taking of oral evidence, this was the theme that dominated the discussion. Williams had stipulated that "basic research" was the responsibility of the universities, whereas "applied research" was the province of the central institutions. (91) He again warned of the danger of academic drift, coding in this context for protecting the universities' research territory. However, the Chairman recalled, in a previous discussion, "the proposition that research was necessary to support teaching in the universities". He considered that the same proposition "could equally be applied to central institutions". (92) Bone was probably thinking aloud when he wondered whether the CIs "were more interested

in gaining greater opportunity to do research or in the income that could be generated thereby". (93)

The principals' summary of evidence was unequivocal: "We regard research as being an essential requirement in the support of course development and quality teaching". It went on: "Without a sustained commitment to research the ethos of our individual institutions would be impoverished" and demanded resource allocation to reflect that commitment. (94) Unfortunately, the oral evidence presented a more confused and uncertain picture. Lacombe of Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Turmeau of Napier, and Paterson of Edinburgh College of Art tended to see research as a form of consultancy or as a means of extending collaboration with industry and commerce, with Paterson actually claiming that research funding was a form of "pump-priming to establish continuing education courses". Richardson of Queen's College invoked CNAIA ideology on having degree courses well underpinned by research. Only Kennedy of RGIT saw the centrality of research "in maintaining the intellectual activity of higher education staff". But even he had to acknowledge that central institution staff had no contractual entitlement to do research and accepted the distinction earlier marked by Williams, which saw "the purpose of university research as extending and discovering knowledge and the purpose of CI research as applying and disseminating knowledge". Still, unless such institutions did undertake research, as Meadows of Glasgow College of Technology agreed, "the calibre of CI staff would decrease". (95)

The letter inviting oral evidence set out a number of forms of institutional collaboration and invited the views of principals on these. The summary letter from the principals affirmed their position clearly: "We assume that 'combined' means simply 'merge'. Whilst we understand and support the need for co-operation between institutions and the formation of academic links as a natural development,

we see no benefits to be gained from a blanket policy decision to merge institutions either regionally or nationally." (96) That expression of unanimity was not reflected in the subsequent discussion with the Council.

Turmeau of Napier pre-empted the discussion by advocating "three regional federations of central institutions and colleges of education, each federation under its own governing body, with institutions remaining separate under their own academic boards. The three federal federations would together constitute the University of Scotland." (97) While this model of institutional collaboration affirmed the rigidity of the binary line, Turmeau saw it as a way of protecting the smaller colleges and giving the non-university institutions the strength to compete with the universities. It was also a response to Bone's comment that smaller institutions would become increasingly uneconomic, with the government being determined to allocate resources thinly, and research funds being allocated on a more selective basis.

Not all the principals shared Turmeau's enthusiasm for a federal approach. Paterson was opposed to it on the grounds that it perpetuated the binary line and would stand in the way of Edinburgh College of Art's developing relationships with both Edinburgh and Heriot-Watt Universities; Ledger of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama opposed it because it threatened the identity of smaller specialist institutions like his own and therefore might harm student recruitment; Richardson, head of another small institution, questioned whether federations "would produce a better return on resource than the existing system"; and Meadows of Glasgow College of Technology favoured "voluntary collaboration" rather than "enforced federation". (98) He saw it also as a threat to the transbinary collaboration that was developing between Glasgow College of Technology and Strathclyde University and doubted whether it would provide a better deal for students.

When asked about the aspirations of the central institutions for university status, Kennedy replied that there were three issues of even greater importance: a way had to be found of assuring school leavers and employers that central institutions were not "second class" institutions because they did not award their own degrees; there was a need for equal funding for equal work, "in whatever part of the higher education system it was done" (99); and central institutions were disadvantaged in competition with universities by the extremely attenuated course approval system they had to undertake with the SED and the CNAA. In Kennedy's view, the resolution of these three problems was more important than questions of title.

In their written summary of oral evidence the principals saw a joint planning and funding body as "an essential development for long-term improvement". The principals all confirmed their commitment to that position, either as a way of fostering transbinary planning or, as Kennedy put it, to enable "meaningful comparisons to be made between the sectors". The only question that arose concerned whether planning should be the responsibility of the SED or an alternative body and the principals favoured the retention of their existing relationship with SED, operating within a wider framework. Williams pressed the principals, suggesting that their preference for a planning and funding body was motivated by a concern to improve the funding of central institutions "especially for research". He sought to disabuse them by maintaining that "the disparities in costs between universities and central institutions were based on funding of research in universities": in his view "teaching costs in universities were similar to those in central institutions." (100) Instead of confronting this challenge, Turmeau claimed that he was not motivated by a desire for "extra funds" but by the need for "coherent organisation and planning of Scottish higher education". That declaration of public spiritedness was supported by his colleagues.

Three principals - Turmeau of Napier, Furniss of the Scottish College of Textiles and Leach of Queen Margaret College - submitted additional evidence to the committee on a personal basis. In a letter dated 10 July 1985, Turmeau submitted a paper which was strongly critical of the existing arrangements in the non-university sector. He claimed that "the resources of the colleges of education are currently under-utilised and these colleges have, over the years, been somewhat remote and distanced from the rest of tertiary education". He believed that there was need for "a merging of the systems of control", while still retaining college identities would result in "more efficient use of resources and provide greater benefits for both CI and CE staff". He thought it ludicrous that two sets of principals should meet independently and that there should be two SED divisions looking after the respective sectors. (101) The second major change he proposed was a federation of the central institutions and the colleges of education into three major groups: south-east of Scotland, central and north Scotland, and west of Scotland. The justification for a federal arrangement was that colleges with fewer than 4,000 FTE "cannot operate effectively either in terms of academic manpower or resources"; small colleges were unlikely to attract the calibre and strength of governing body necessary to sustain effective control: groups comprising 12,000 FTE or more would attract "highly responsible governing bodies of considerable power and influence"; these federated groups would be highly compatible with universities, resulting in "healthy competition across the binary line and raising the image of public sector higher education". (102) Finally, he sought the establishment of a Scottish Grants Committee to distribute funding to both universities and colleges, drawing on the experience of his visit to the State of California, where the University of California and the State University existed side-by-side. He saw as the recipe for a successful higher education system "healthy competition between establishments that have distinctive roles to fulfil." (103)

Secondly, Furniss, Principal of the Scottish College of Textiles, in a personal submission, (104) argued in similar vein for the combination of the central institutions and colleges of education "to provide an integrated sector of public higher education". He, too, favoured the federation model with institutions retaining a degree of autonomy. However, there would be a single board representative of all the constituent institutions, which implied a merger. The difference between Furniss and Turmeau was that Furniss wished to see the universities as part of these federations. If the universities were unwilling to join, Furniss would grant the resultant Scottish federation "with full degree-awarding charter".

Finally, a personal statement by Donald Leach, just appointed Principal of Queen Margaret College, was strongly critical of the federation principle on the grounds that there was "no evidence that staff or students believe there is any need for major changes in the organisation of CIs". (105) He claimed, indeed, that major institutional change could meet with vigorous opposition: "it causes a loss of overall efficiency and debilitating in-fighting and bitterness which can take over a decade to die down". (106) On the other hand, he agreed that, if linking with universities was not possible, then a federal arrangement would be acceptable, provided that "institutional autonomy was not down-graded" and the federation had full degree-awarding powers. (107)

It is perhaps symptomatic of their standing that the record of the oral evidence submitted by the college of education principals amounted to a single page, whereas that on the universities took seven pages, and the central institutions four pages. Like the CI principals, they had prepared a statement in advance and the Chairman, Illsley of Dundee, was allowed to read it to the Council, although two of the principals, Carroll of Dunfermline College of Physical Education and Kirk of

Moray House, were not associated with it and were unable to attend. The evidence was received on 29 July 1985.

The Council had decided in advance that "the most important point on which the views of the college of education principals should be obtained was whether teacher training should be continued to be carried out in essentially monotechnic institutions". (108). The corporate statement was a firm defence of the monotechnic principle. It stated,

"The monotechnic quality of the colleges was, in fact, the burning glass of purpose which gathers and focuses the many rays of curricula and purpose."

That principle did not "exclude collaboration with other institutions in the use of resources, of staff and buildings, or in the networking of courses. Less flamboyantly, it went on, "The principals are united in the belief that the colleges should continue to act as specialist institutions." The rest of the corporate statement had little to contribute to the discussion of the organisation and funding of institutions apart from ending with the rather feeble personal note by the Chairman. (109)

In the discussion with members of the Council, the monotechnic principle was defended on the grounds that there were students in other cognate disciplines, such as social work and community education, in colleges of education. It was also defended on the grounds that, according to McGettrick, monotechnic institutions "could adapt quickly to changing needs and could ensure satisfactory links with schools". (110) He did concede, however, that links with other institutions of higher education were desirable, as did McNaught of Craigie. Adams of Aberdeen maintained that "to transfer responsibility for teacher education to universities or

central institutions would lose the advantages which colleges of education have derived from their relations with central government and local government". (111) It would also weaken in-service training, which depended on a close association with local authorities. When pressed on the over-capacity of the existing system, McNaught emphasised the dispersal principle: teacher education should be widely distributed and whatever surplus space existed should be used "to diversify their activities". Despite that, Adams admitted that in-service was "better done in schools than in colleges". (112) Illsley somewhat weakly claimed that students preferred to be trained in their local area but had no answer to the Council member who drew the analogy with the centralisation of Roman Catholic teacher education in Bearsden, Glasgow. The argument advanced by the colleges was that pre-service and in-service were interdependent: if you had to have in-service on a dispersed basis then pre-service should be dispersed also. The discussion of the national planning of higher education was brief, although long enough for Illsley to make the damaging admission that he was "not confident that the colleges would have sufficient influence in a planning body for the whole of Scottish higher education". (113)

The two principals who were unable to attend submitted individual personal evidence. Carroll was critical of the monotechnic principle, claiming that "for students it is helpful to work alongside other students training for related professions so that there are commonalities and differences". (114) She put forward Dunfermline College of Physical Education as one such institution, one that had gone in for diversification to provide "the richest learning environment". She strongly rejected incorporations or mergers, believing that "slim and fit colleges will be needed to meet fluctuating future demands. Nothing is less flexible than a large institution." And concluded, "A federation of all Scottish non-university institutions of HE is to be avoided at all costs. It would emphasise the binary divide." (115)

Finally, a personal submission was submitted from the Principal of Moray House. It began by claiming that initial training was presently distributed in too many centres, with the result that staffing and other resources were not being efficiently deployed and "the quality of students' training was endangered by the absence of significant numbers of staff and students to generate the kind of intellectually stimulating environment which a programme of professional preparation should provide." Secondly, the paper argued for the substantial investment in in-service because the staff development needs in the schools were "colossal". It argued for the dispersal principle, believing that major centres for professional development must be readily accessible to practising teachers. Thirdly, it claimed that there was a need to think systemically: since the number of centres providing initial training would require to be reduced while, at the same time, the number of centres offering in-service and continuing education must be maintained, some centres would require to lose their initial training function.

He then set out two options: "broadly monotechnic" institutions and "amalgamations with other institutions". He explicitly preferred the first of these, believing that there ought to be room for institutions which "make no claim to comprehensive academic or intellectual coverage but which have a distinctive and specialised professional function to perform. The centrality of that preoccupation with professional activity does not weaken the institution: on the contrary, it is the source of the institution's strength, providing a focus for individual, interdepartmental and institutional activity, sharpening the sense of institutional purpose, and providing a powerful source of student motivation." Finally, he offered two objections to institutional amalgamations. In the first place, he claimed that colleges operating within a larger institutional structure tended to fare badly in competition for funds and resources with other faculties and, secondly, "the amalgamation of teacher education within larger institutions would entail the

transference of decision-making on courses and related matters from those who have the necessary expertise and experience to make relevant professional judgements to those who lack that experience and who are inclined to regard education - as opposed to the pursuit of scholarship - with something approaching disdain and who have failed to grasp the distinction between academic accomplishment and the capacity for intelligent professional action." (116)

The oral evidence may be seen to provide further reinforcement of the stances adopted in the written evidence. It confirmed the universities' commitment to their own distinctive function and to their allegiance to a UK system of government; it provided a further demonstration of the sense of grievance experienced by the central institutions on the need for parity of funding and involvement in research, although it demonstrated that the CIs themselves were far from agreed on the most appropriate way in which that could be secured. Finally, the oral evidence demonstrated the strength of the commitment to a separate system of teacher education within a nationally planned and funded system.

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CHAPTER 4 STEAC DELIBERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter 3 demonstrated that there was widespread public and professional interest in the issues facing the Council. Indeed, not for twenty years, when the Robbins Committee was examining higher education, had there been such a comprehensive and intensive critical commentary on higher education in Scotland. If the evidence demonstrated widespread interest, it also demonstrated that opinion on several key issues was divided. For all that, the Council produced a report that was unanimous. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse how that outcome was achieved. As in Chapter 3, the analysis will focus on a limited number of key issues: the justification for a tripartite system of higher education; the institutional arrangements for teacher education; the relationships between institutions of higher education; and the planning and funding of higher education at national level.

The examination of the Council's attempts to address these questions will involve an analysis of the relationship between three factors. The first of these is the evidence. Valuable as that was as an indication of public and professional opinion, it could not be accepted simpliciter as the main guide to future strategy. Indeed, early in their deliberations members of the Council convinced themselves that they need not feel too constrained by the evidence. At its very first meeting Wilson advised the Council that "it should not hesitate to explore all options, however radical". (1) Later, Harper maintained that "STEAC ought not to base its decisions on the unwillingness of those affected to accept them". (2) And, subsequently, Bone stated that "STEAC should neither reject options because of adverse reaction from those who would be affected nor make recommendations simply because they were likely to be acceptable. (3) It will therefore be important to assess the extent to which the Council was influenced by the evidence. Secondly, by an examination of the minutes and papers of the Council itself, the interactions of its members and the

flow of the debate over twenty-five meetings will be studied in order to assess the role of individual members in shaping the final recommendations. Thirdly, it is necessary to consider the context. STEAC's terms of reference obliged it to consult with the UGC, with NAB, and with other bodies. In the course of its work, other documents appeared: the government Green Paper on Higher Education was published (4), the report of the CAG on teacher education appeared (5), and, in the lifetime of the Council, Wilson and his Departmental colleagues were cross-examined by the PAC. All of these had an impact on the work of the Council. It is the interplay between these factors - the evidence, the transactions of the Council, and the context - in shaping the Council's recommendations that will be the central focus of this chapter.

The Validity of a Tripartite System

At an early meeting of the Council, Wilson expressed the hope that STEAC "would refute the notion that a binary division existed in the Scottish higher education system". (6) He meant by that claim that in England two rival systems co-existed on either side of the binary line but in vigorous competition with each other. By contrast, in Scotland SED had prevented the CIs from extending into areas such as the liberal arts. The official line, therefore, was that in Scotland higher education institutions were "complementary": each sector made a distinctive contribution to a differentiated system. That position was set out in the briefing paper which accompanied the request for evidence. The universities were associated with "advanced learning", with research that was "international in character", and had a monopoly of such studies as medicine, veterinary science, dentistry, law and divinity. (7) Central institutions prepared students for careers "and this emphasis on vocational and professional education distinguishes them from universities". (8) The research that they undertook was "of an applied nature and strictly related to the teaching function". (9) And colleges of education undertook all of Scotland's

teacher training, apart from the 7% provided by the University of Stirling. (10)
Their research "related mainly to the work of the education system ". (11)

Clearly, the SED paper either reflected widely held views or helped to shape much of the evidence, for that tended to support the complementarity thesis that the different sectors made distinctive contributions. Several submissions sought to mark the alleged sectoral distinctions by referring to the mode of governance or funding source of institutions: they were "UGC controlled" or "SED controlled" or "LEA controlled", and repeated references were made to "private" or "public" institutions. However, these categories do not imply functional differences, and these were the differences between institutions which the Council had to consider if it was to meet the obligation imposed by its terms of reference to address the relationships between institutions.

The Council was also made aware - by the paper which is reproduced as diagram 4 on page 16 of the report - that there was substantial overlapping of provision between the four sectors: not even teacher education was restricted to the colleges of education; social work was found in all four sectors; sub-degree provision exists in colleges of further education as well as in central institutions, and there were significant overlaps between central institutions and universities in science, technology, computing, as well as in "social administrative and business studies". Given the weight of the evidence and the strong steer by SED, how did STEAC resolve the issue of institutional differentiation? Since the colleges of education were acknowledged to be strongly differentiated, the key issue for the Council, and it was one that was strongly contested, concerned the difference between universities and central institutions.

There were members of the Council - notably Williams and Gowenlock, the UGC observer - who had an interest in maintaining the independence and separateness of

the university sector. They referred repeatedly to the way in which the evidence supported the "complementary" thesis, that universities and central institutions had distinctive but separate contributions to make to Scottish higher education. They thought it was significant that the joint statement generated by the UGC and the NAB fully acknowledged that "there would be a division of labour between the different sectors of higher education". (12) They claimed that "the submissions supported that view" (13) and Wilson agreed. (14) Finally, the Council noted that the Green Paper had reinforced the binary distinction and had rejected "parity of funding for universities and other institutions" (15) on the grounds that "universities still have relatively higher operating costs by virtue of more generous provision of land, premises, staffing and equipment". (16) However, what was the basis of the distinction between universities and non-university institutions? It was articulated at the very first meeting of the Council by Swinnerton-Dyer, Chairman of the UGC, who had been invited to attend the launch of the Council. In that meeting he stated:

"The significant distinction was that in the universities teaching and research were of equal significance and were funded accordingly, because it was cheaper to undertake research in combination with teaching than separately. Although there was a place for applied research in the non-university sector, fundamental research should be undertaken by the universities because of this cost factor." (17)

The fundamental difference between the two kinds of institution - irrespective of their different modes of governance and the degree of public control under which they operated - was the attention devoted by the universities to research and that was the distinction repeatedly insisted upon by the protagonists for the universities on the Council and which they were determined to perpetuate.

Cuming, Principal of Dundee College of Technology, was just as determined to end that distinction and, in a remarkably sustained piece of advocacy extending practically throughout the life of the Council, he challenged it and campaigned for a single integrated system of higher education. He adopted three lines of attack. Firstly, he questioned the universities' monopoly of research. At the very first meeting of the Council he crossed swords with Swinnerton-Dyer in these words: "Insofar as research enriched teaching, the non-university sector had an equal claim on resources and there was no basis for the present disparities in funding between the two sectors." (18) Drawing on his extensive experience with the CNAA, Cuming maintained that the contribution of research to the teaching process was stressed by the CNAA and proposals for degree courses submitted to the CNAA for validation were required to demonstrate the recognition of this contribution. Not content with claiming an entitlement to research funds for the CIs, Cuming claimed that the allocation of funds to universities for research was "insufficiently scrutinised". (19) And, in a letter to the Chairman of STEAC, he queried, rather cheekily, why £631m was allocated to the universities "on no other pretext than that about 30% of university staff time was supposed to be devoted to research". (20) In addition, Cuming "welcomed the Joint UGC/NAB statement because it recognised the legitimate research role of major public sector institutions and might lead to closer analysis of the case for devoting £631m to university research". (21) By contrast, he maintained, the Green Paper "appeared to imply that relatively low funding levels in non-university institutions were acceptable". (22)

The universities' response to this attack was to acknowledge that "CIs had a legitimate grievance about the inadequacy of their research funds . . . but the universities would need to ensure that their own share of the limited resources available for research had not diminished". (23) The CIs, it was argued, should concentrate on applied research, leaving fundamental research to the universities. In defending that position the universities referred to the official SED line and noted

that it had been supported by the NAB when it emphasised that "the prime importance of research in the public sector colleges was in sustaining the quality of teaching, especially at honours degree and postgraduate levels". (24)

One of the reasons for maintaining that fundamental research should remain the prerogative of the universities was that there was increased competition for research funding to the extent that the UGC had decided to move towards greater selectivity and to the concentration of research funds in a smaller number of research centres, rather than expanding the number of such centres as was implied by extending research funding to the CIs. Williams and Gowenlock were both well aware that "any increase in research funding for public sector institutions could only be found from within existing research funds" and therefore at the expense of the universities. (25) That position appeared to be strongly supported by Davies of the UGC, who, while deputising for Gowenlock, argued that "fundamental research was an essential function of a university and was important in the distinction between universities and other institutions". Cuming rather impatiently rejoined that "universities selected the criteria for defining a university which were most suitable for their own interests and these criteria might not match the needs of society". (26) There is in that statement a despairing sense that no amount of argument or evidence could weaken the traditional institutional distinction precisely because the most powerful of these institutions - the universities - had stipulated distinctions which were to their advantage as well as being sanctioned by tradition.

The second strand in Cuming's attack on the binary system was to demonstrate that it was unfair in the sense that the allocation of funds decisively discriminated against the public sector. The most direct way of substantiating that claim was by comparing unit costs for the two sectors. The unit cost figures provided by SED for students in each of the three sectors for 1982/83 were as follows:

Universities:	£4,628
Colleges of education:	£3,663
CIs:	£3,074

The universities' response to these figures was to claim that their costs included highly expensive forms of training such as medicine, for which the average unit cost was in the region of £8,000, as well as postgraduate students. Cuming therefore undertook an analysis of comparable groups of students from the two sectors. When Williams provided unit cost figures for Glasgow University, Cuming rejoined at the following meeting by providing comparable figures for unit costs at Dundee College of Technology. The comparative figures were as follows

Glasgow University (27)		Dundee College of Technology (28)	Dundee College of Technology excluding sub-degree courses
Medicine and Veterinary Medicine:	£7,900	-	-
Science and Engineering:	£5,300	£2,860 (54% of Glasgow figure)	£2,470 (47% of Glasgow figure)
Arts:	£3,400	£1,970 (58% of Glasgow figure)	£1,790 (53% of Glasgow figure)

Cuming concluded that, on the evidence "provision in central institutions was economical of resources compared with provision in universities", whereas Williams concluded that the evidence showed that "Dundee College of Technology was under-funded". (29)

Harper subsequently produced data for Paisley College of Technology and compared costs with those at Glasgow University and Strathclyde University. That discussion concluded that "central institutions were placed at a disadvantage by their

low levels of support funds and consequent shortage of non-academic staff". (30) Despite their lower costs, Cuming believed that "courses in public sector institutions were at least equal in quality and relevance to university courses. Costs might be higher in the universities because of the amount of money allocated to research, but was this justified?" The differential funding, according to Cuming, was reflected in "different standards in accommodation, libraries, equipment, staffing and student facilities". (31) The problem was that funding policy "derives from factors such as the historical designation of institutions rather than on the basis of objective criteria such as student numbers and course type". (32) These differences in designation, he maintained, "were used as an excuse for other inequities". (33) He suggested that "funds ought to be redistributed in favour of the non-university sector". (34)

The third strand in Cuming's analysis was to point to the historical emergence of two categories of institution which were treated differentially to the detriment of CIs. On the one hand were the universities, who were formally funded for research, without apparently any obligation to show that that research reflected national priorities; they were not subject to central control and could therefore develop programmes more speedily in response to change. That was to the detriment of central institution courses, which had a more protracted control procedure and academic scrutiny to undergo. That "lack of symmetry in the existing planning arrangements was a cause of friction". (35) On the other hand there were the CIs, which were denied access to research funds; which were under-funded compared to the universities; where work was subjected to detailed government planning and approval; and where courses were subject to external validation. Despite the constraints under which they operated, the CIs developed programmes that were in no way inferior to those provided by universities. They were cost-effective and responsive institutions, performing well a key role in relation to the economic life of Scotland. Cuming strongly believed that "the

distinctive role of different sectors should not be used to justify existing inequalities". (36) "All sectors now form part of the same higher education system and should be accorded similar treatment in all respects for similar functions." (37) The CIs were worthy of an enhanced academic standing. He pointed out that Heriot-Watt College and Glasgow College of Science and Technology were accorded university status "when they were less mature than the present central institutions". (38) It was his view that "public opinion under-valued the non-university sector, although many of the distinctions between CIs and universities had long since vanished." (39)

The irony was that Cuming's campaign had the effect of convincing members of the Council that there was, indeed, a strong case for protecting the integrity of the CI sector, for refusing to give it university status, and for ensuring that, in its cost-effective way, it would continue to provide "value for money". Bone, for example, pointed out that "the switch to Science and Technology will involve substantial costs" but "it appears that the non-university sector could expand provision in these subjects more cheaply than universities". (40) The same point was subsequently made by Harper. (41) Finally, Wilson of SED pointed out that "there could be no obvious advantage to the government in raising CI funds to university level if, as appeared to be the case, central institution graduates were already generally regarded as satisfactory". (42) For these reasons the Council persuaded itself to prefer the separatist model of higher education. Consequently, when Wilson of SED came to sum up the discussion he concluded: "The Council did appear to favour the continuation of a distinctive public sector of higher education in Scotland", (43) the only significant change being that CIs would be funded for research, provided that it was applied and was intended to underpin teaching and to support industry. (44) Three factors can be said to have brought about this outcome: the strong support for the universities' predominant role in research, which implied a continuation of operation under the UGC; Cuming's able

advocacy of the importance and cost-effectiveness of CIs; the quite surprising acquiescence of the Council in the status quo; and the SED's cleverness in eliding support for the functions and cost-effectiveness of the CIs into a justification for a mode of governance as a publicly funded sector.

As was noted in chapter 3, the CIs themselves were strongly committed to the principle of equal rewards for equal tasks. They saw in the advent of STEAC an opportunity to redress long-standing grievances and discrimination, including an entitlement to research funding. Williams suspected that that was the prime motive behind the CI campaign for a unified system. At the meeting with CI principals on 29 July 1985 he made the point explicitly: he "wondered whether the motive for their support of joint planning and funding was to improve the funding of central institutions, particularly for research". (45) Turmeau, followed by others, made the obvious disclaimer: "Of course not: the motive was not 'extra funding' but a desire to provide a coherent organisation and planning of Scottish higher education." (46) But they were aware that Williams had got close to the heart of their campaign. Of course, they were much too polite to return the question: Was it not the case that the determination shown by Williams and Gowenlock to retain the UGC link was motivated by a concern to deny the CIs precisely what they were seeking?

A Separate College of Education Sector?

The evidence from the college of education sector, supported by teachers' unions and others, favoured the retention of colleges of education, although three of the college of education submissions suggested that these colleges should either have an association with a university or form part of a regional federation of institutions. The oral evidence from the college principals confirmed their endorsement of the monotechnic principle, and the supplementary evidence submitted by the two principals unable to attend the meeting on 29 July 1985 - Carroll and Kirk - were

even more vehement in their advocacy of the need to protect the institutional identity and integrity of colleges of education. The key arguments used to justify that position were that specialist institutions were a source of educational and professional strength; that the strong links the teacher education institutions had developed with the teaching profession needed to be maintained; and that absorption in a larger institutional framework would marginalise teacher education and threaten standards. It is clear that the Council was very favourably impressed by the evidence it received. It acknowledged that the teaching profession believed that the system had "served Scotland well in the past and will continue to do so". (47) It considered that "the peculiar strengths of the colleges of education derive very largely from their single-minded commitment to the teaching profession, which provides a clear focus for their activities, strengthens their sense of purpose, and provides a source of motivation for students". (48)

Three papers provided the basis for the Council's further deliberations on the college of education system: one by Bone, one by Wilson, and one by Cuming. Bone's paper acknowledged that the monotechic character of the colleges was now "unusual throughout the world" (49) and that, if the STEAC was proposing changes in the rest of higher education, it would be "rather strange to leave the colleges simply as they are". He identified six options:

1. Reduction in the number of colleges but teacher training continuing in largely monotechic institutions.
2. Linking of individual colleges of education with individual universities.
3. Merger of one or more individual colleges of education with one or more individual central institutions to form polytechnics.

4. The linking of one or more colleges of education with groups of central institutions into a number of federations.
5. The linking of all the colleges of education and central institutions into one national federation for Scotland.
6. A variety of these approaches which would allow some colleges of education to choose the university solution, while others to choose the polytechnic or federation one.

He made it clear that his own preference was for full absorption of the colleges of education into the universities "for the next generation of staff and students because of the established reputation of the universities, the opportunities for teaching and research at high levels, and the better conditions of service". His second choice would have been associated status with the universities, "if it was regarded definitely as a transitional stage to full absorption", but, "as a permanent arrangement, it would attach inferior status to teacher education in a way that I would regard as unacceptable". (50) He was aware that his own preference would not be universally acceptable: "There would be objections . . . partly because the colleges would lose their identities and partly because, under present circumstances, universities might be unwilling to absorb over-staffed colleges". (51)

The Departmental paper introduced by Wilson set out factual information on the college of education system, noting the student population, the capacity of the individual colleges, and the authorised staffing entitlement of each. (52) It then went on "to place before the Council in a convenient form some questions of policy which, in logic, appeared to require examination before the Council could reach decisions on the options presented by Dr Bone". (53) Among the questions presented for discussion were:

- (a) "Should teachers be trained in monotechnic or multidisciplinary institutions?
- (b) "Should teacher training be provided on a regional or on a national basis for pre-service and in-service training respectively?"
- (c) "What should be the relationship between colleges of education and universities?"
- (d) "Is further diversification of the colleges as free-standing institutions possible?"
- (e) "How can the narrow focus of such institutions as Dunfermline College of Physical Education and Craigie be obviated?"

While Cuming's paper was concerned with the whole non-university sector, the case he was defending - the need to establish a strong non-university sector to rival the universities - necessitated reference to the colleges of education. His references were not flattering, referring indeed to "the infirmities of the colleges of education which arise from their academic isolation, over-provision, and excessive costliness". (54)

The case for reform certainly had its supporters on the Council. Williams was totally unimpressed by the arguments for the status quo. He "accepted that the Secretary of State would wish to retain control over the output of teachers, but did not regard this as a reason for excluding the possibility of teacher training being done by universities, where the government exercised effective control over intakes of medical and veterinary students". He saw no "insurmountable difficulties" in universities providing teacher education "even for Roman Catholic students". (55)

In addition, Cuming, whose critique of the colleges of education system had been noted, supported the case for change, maintaining that "in small institutions the staff were academically isolated, like the students" and the "costs of administration and infrastructure were also unduly high". (56) He also referred to "substantial unused accommodation which could be used by other institutions". (57) In a letter to the Chairman he made reference to the claim that teacher education is best undertaken in monotechnic institutions and replied that he had "yet to see any evidence for the validity of that proposition". (58) And the Chairman of the Council himself implied that he, too, favoured reform when he "expressed disappointment at the reluctance of the college of education principals to accept a reduction in the number of monotechnic colleges or the possibility of union with central institutions", (59) and when he claimed that "teachers were probably too isolated from the world outside education". (60) With such a formidable group in favour of change, why did the Council conclude, as it did at its meeting on 12 August, that "teachers should continue to be trained in specialist institutions". (61)

Firstly, there was a fear of academic drift, expressed by Bone and by Smith, who opposed absorption of the colleges into universities "because of the likely adverse effect on professional training through an excessively academic approach". (62) Smith made the same point rather differently, but also controversially, when he stated that the involvement of colleges with universities "might be of advantage to student teachers as students but it would not necessarily help them to become better teachers". (63)

Secondly, despite Williams's assurances that the Secretary of State's right to control numbers would be protected in the same way as for medical students, and despite Bone's reminder that teacher education was incorporated within the universities in England and Wales, members of the Council clearly feared that the constitutional position in Scotland, where teacher education was the responsibility

of a different minister, would weaken the control which ministers at the SED had always exercised over teacher education.

Thirdly, members of the Council feared that if, as Bone claimed, the incorporation of colleges within universities would lead to the adoption by college staff of university pay and conditions, (64) the costs of training teachers, already high because of the favourable staff:student ratio, would increase still further, and that was confirmed by Williams's claim that "universities would not be able to take on all staff in colleges of education and would only accept the number which could be employed at university rates for the sum of money that was transferred from the colleges". (65)

Fourthly, it was acknowledged that incorporation of colleges of education in another institution would not necessarily mean integration, in the sense of enabling potential teachers to rub shoulders with those destined for other occupations. For one thing, the central institutions were already full to capacity; for another, "where a college of education became part of another institution of higher education but remained on its present site, students and staff would continue to be segregated". (66)

Fifthly, the Council was clearly impressed by the unanimity of view expressed by the principals in their oral and supplementary personal evidence, that display of unity being enhanced by the absence, because he was a member of the Council, of the one principal most committed to linkage with the universities.

Finally, the group on the Council committed to change was divided, principally because Cuming was angling for incorporation of the colleges not with the universities but with the central institutions. The paper Cuming submitted argued for a strong public sector organised on a federal basis to create a new University of

Scotland. It would have been contradictory for Cuming therefore to support the incorporation of the colleges of education within the universities. In addition, Cuming was explicitly opposed to their incorporation by the universities for two reasons: firstly, since the public sector "specialised in the provision of vocational courses", he did not believe "it would be appropriate for teacher training to be transferred to the universities". Besides, he continued, "some departments of education in Scottish universities were very weak and the absorption of colleges of education into university faculties of education would not solve the problem of academic isolation". (67) Finally, drawing on every conceivable argument to keep colleges away from the universities, he pointed out that "absorption of teacher training by universities would end validation of such courses by the CNAA and would be unacceptable to some colleges of education". (68)

All of these considerations, when taken along with the evidence that strongly supported the college of education system, persuaded the Council that

"The standard of teacher training in Scotland will, in our view, be best preserved by its concentration in thriving specialist establishments with a common sense of purpose." (69)

Bone continued to be unhappy about that conclusion. When the proposal was made belatedly for an enhancement of the standing of the central institutions, he wondered about the impact of that on morale in the college of education sector and questioned "whether STEAC should not return to the proposition that colleges of education and other central institutions might be similarly grouped in functional federations". (70) The minute rather disappointingly records that "there was little support for this". (71) Instead, the Council expressed its support for the provision of additional funds to the colleges of education for research in education and agreed that "the continuation of teacher training at Stirling University should be

questioned, in the context of rationalisation of teacher training provision". (72) These, clearly, were sops to college of education opinion that would not be impressed by the proposal, now to be considered, for reducing the number of colleges. Bone's last interjection in the discussion was that the colleges should "increase mutual collaboration" and "strengthen their links with universities", his own "personal preference". (73)

Having decided on the institutional context of teacher education, the Council moved to address the question of the size of the college system. The Council had been made aware that there was substantial over-capacity and there was considerable pressure on the Council for action. At a time when resources were scarce, when it was vitally important to assure that these were deployed to best advantage, the notion of over-staffed and over-resourced colleges of education was bound to be an embarrassment to the SED. The early deliberations of the Council allowed Wilson to begin the process of persuasion. When the Chairman asked whether "there were figures for the excess capacity of the colleges of education", he replied to the effect that "SED could not at present quantify precisely the overall surplus provision . . . although the existence of substantial over-capacity was fully acknowledged." (74) Later, he claimed that "if fewer colleges of education were training the same number of overall students the unit costs would be lower". (75) And that discussion concluded with a reference to "the possibility of achieving some measure of rationalisation". (76) Finally, Wilson stated that "ministers might not be content to allow existing surplus capacity in the colleges to remain after STEAC had reported". (77)

However, there is no doubt that the Council were strongly influenced by the report of the CAG, which was published on 5 June 1985. (78) The report was a harsh indictment of the SED. It was highly critical of a number of features of the management of the colleges: the absence of definitive information on the capacity

of the colleges (79); the fact that the colleges of education's student:staff ratio was 8:4.1 compared to the CI's figure of 11:1 and the SED target of 10:1 (80); unit costs in the colleges of education were £3,663 per annum compared to the CIs' £3,074 (81); there were two demonstration schools costing £1.4 million that were acknowledged no longer to be needed for demonstration purposes (82); only 60% of primary graduates and 70% of secondary graduates had found jobs, thus implying expensive over-provision (83); while 213 FTE were devoted to in-service on a theoretical ratio of 10:1, 60% to 70% of those students never attended college, taking their courses in schools (84); and, while the student numbers had reduced over the past decade by 53%, staff had reduced by only 41%. (85) While the report was aware that the colleges were "more or less single purpose institutions unable to temper a precipitous fall in their intake by any substantial diversion to other educational tasks", it considered there was a significant over-capacity in the college sector. It noted that the gross capacity of the colleges was now calculated at 10,556 places and the net capacity (less what is leased to others) was 8,900. (86) With the projected student number of 7,381 for 1995/96, it was clear that "provision still exceeds foreseeable needs", with the biggest problem at Dundee, where there was a capacity of 1,800 places but there had never been more than 700 students, and at Craigie, with a capacity of 800 but with only 200 teacher education students, although half of this space was leased to a local authority college. (87)

Obviously, such a massive range of critical features in the college of education system was bound to be a focus of scrutiny by the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons when it cross-examined senior members of the Department on 26 June 1985. The Department was represented by James Scott, Secretary, Ian Wilson, the Department's Assessor on STEAC, and D Campbell, Principal, who carried responsibility for colleges of education. Given the range of problems identified by the CAG, it was predictable that the PAC would give the Departmental officers a difficult time. Their expectations were not to be disappointed.

Throughout, the Department was completely on the defensive. Why had the Department done little since the CTES report of 1981? Why was the staff:student ratio in Scottish colleges more favourable than for comparable colleges in England and Wales? Why were so many teachers still unemployed more than a year after completing their programmes? The Department defended itself well on some of these issues. For example, the questioning about the staff:student ratio north and south of the border simply did not take account of the fact that in Scotland 213 FTE were set aside for in-service work, a remarkably generous allocation and evidence of a commitment to the implementation of major school reforms; in addition, a further 8% was devoted to research and development activities. In response to the serious criticism about the small numbers of students taking the different secondary subjects in the various colleges, with no fewer than fifty of them having fewer than ten students, it was explained that specialists in the different curricular areas were required in colleges to teach on the primary courses, and that rationalisation of provision was made difficult by students' common practice of taking a double qualification to increase their marketability in schools.

However, the most hostile questioning was reserved for the Department's lethargy on the accommodation question. Two examples illustrate the aggressiveness of the approach.

Mr Sylvester, MP: Take the third point, which is the question of capacity. I have listened to your explanation about counting the seats and all that, but I understand there are just seven colleges and it does not seem to me, with respect, to be a massive managerial problem to set an assessment of each college and actually go round and see who is rattling about in spare capacity. You do not need to produce common statistics for

the whole system to do that. You send someone to have a look and make an assessment in each college.

Mr Scott: "You would certainly get an impressionistic result by doing that. Any rationalisation proposal will immediately produce a torrent of argument that is ill-conceived and ill-calculated and we must have a very strong foundation of fact on which to base it."

Mr Sylvester: In the meantime, time passes. I am fascinated by the speed of this operation It seems to me that the process of rationalisation of the system has been allowed to be delayed. Do you not think it is all terribly slow? (88)

Then again.

Mr Latham: Now that the STEAC report is presumably not too far away, do you envisage that there will be a rather more rapid addressing of these issues? I must confess that the dispassionate observer gets the impression that the matter is being regularly kicked into touch.

Mr Scott: It seems to me that for the past ten years the colleges of education have been in continuous turmoil with cut after cut being imposed against the background of a very considerable political battle, so it has not been a scene of inaction . . . (89)

Mr Latham: "Forgive me for being dense, but what is to stop the Department picking up the telephone and asking or sending someone there (Moray House) to have a look?" (90)

It is inconceivable that Wilson, having had to undergo questioning of this degree of frankness, would not be most anxious to do all he could to ensure that STEAC made recommendations which made rationalisation of the college system an urgent political imperative for the Secretary of State and so STEAC recommended. Of course, Wilson would not have seen the report of the cross-examination for that did not appear until December 1985, but he would have been able to anticipate the severity of its conclusions. The final report of the PAC, having criticised the SED for not having reliable up-to-date figures, stated "We note that SED accept that the position here is not very satisfactory. We go further and say that it is totally unsatisfactory that SED do not have, and have not previously taken steps to obtain, information which was clearly essential to inform decisions on college rationalisation and for dealing with problems of surplus accommodation." (91)

The report went on:

"In view of the extent to which teacher training facilities are already thinly spread, in terms of student numbers and course provision, and given existing geographical locations, we are not wholly convinced that SED have given sufficient consideration to the costs of retaining such a wide range of facilities and resources in relation to the benefits they give." (92)

It was clear that there was a significant over-capacity, even when allowance was made for the fact that, as Cuthbert maintained, "the number of entrants to pre-service courses of teacher training in colleges of education was expected to

double over the next ten years", (93) and even although he acknowledged that predicting demand was complicated by "wastage amongst teachers in employment" and "the uncertainty of projections of numbers of school children", factors which suggested that the range of uncertainty could be of the order of "plus or minus a thousand or so". (94) Despite all these provisos, the PAC was led to believe that "accommodation in the teacher training field will continue to exceed requirements by a considerable margin for the foreseeable future". (95)

The Council was driven to the conclusion that there was a need for some rationalisation of the system. Gray, the former Principal of Craigie, strongly defended the relationship between colleges of education and the schools, which she felt might be restricted by "centralising teacher training". (96) However, even she was forced to acknowledge the force of the argument and "accepted, very reluctantly, that training of primary teachers should be more centralised because of the need to rationalise provision so that greater cost-effectiveness could be achieved". (97)

One of the complicating factors was that, despite the acknowledged need for rationalisation, there was a need for dispersal to ensure that schools had access to colleges for in-service purposes. The Department's answer to that was to invoke the principle of out-stations, which had enabled St Andrew's College to provide a nation-wide form of support for Roman Catholic teachers in Edinburgh and Dundee. The solution of rationalisation, while maintaining a degree of dispersal, was reached by the recommendation that "To achieve adequate geographical coverage in the training of teachers for non-denominational schools, colleges of education should be retained in the north, west and east of the country. A total of four colleges might, therefore, be a more appropriate number to cover the pre-service training needs of the Scottish teaching force." (98) That rough

calculation was to provide the basis for the most sustained debate once the report was published.

The Institutional Organisation of Higher Education in Scotland

The terms of reference of the Council required it to report on "the general principles which should govern relationships between universities and other institutions". It was therefore inevitable that attention should be devoted to the way in which higher education is organised at the institutional level. Besides, it was already apparent that the financial pressures on higher education would require the most careful use of resources, and the Council was bound to question whether the existing structure of over thirty separate establishments, some of them very small and highly specialised, constituted the most cost-effective and efficient way of providing higher education in Scotland.

The evidence suggested that much discussion had been devoted, in institutions as well as in representative bodies, to this question and several suggestions had been made for institutional co-operation of various kinds, through faculty arrangements or through federations of one kind or another. The division of opinion was reflected in the supplementary evidence submitted by principals of central institutions and colleges of education. Two of these argued for regional federations, in one case of all higher education institutions in an area, in the other of all non-university higher education institutions; two expressed serious reservations about such federations, one of them stating that "a federation of all Scottish non-university institutions of higher education is to be avoided at all costs". (99) And a fifth expressed, as a first preference, three transbinary federations in the west, east and north of Scotland, and, as a second, either three regional non-university federations or "a single Scottish federation of public higher education with full degree-granting powers". (100)

Since previous discussion had appeared to rule out any link between the central institutions and the universities, and between the colleges of education and the universities, the discussion on the Council inevitably focused on the most appropriate way in which non-university institutions might relate to each other. The idea which dominated the discussion was that of a federal university, formed by the association of existing non-university institutions. Cuming vigorously advocated this development. In his case, the justification for the initiative was to overcome the chronic under-funding of non-university institutions; and to combat the way in which these institutions were devalued by employers and by school leavers because of their designation, and because they were perceived to be inferior in not having university standing. Cuming maintained that these institutions were fully worthy of university recognition, in any event, but was convinced that their formal designation as universities would strengthen their marketability and recognise the standard of their graduates and their work. Such a development would be particularly valuable at a time when competition for students was intensifying. In Cuming's mind the creation of such a federal institution would finally end the divisiveness which characterised higher education in Scotland and lead to a more equitable funding regime. Besides, Cuming's plan did not involve the creation of a large number of universities, which would have been politically unacceptable (101): all he sought was one new institution, a combination of "those non-university institutions who wished to join". The federation would therefore retain such features of existing non-university institutions as "external peer-group validation, a range of sub-degree work, extensive continuing education, and responsiveness to local needs". (102) It was Cuming's view that "only the designation of university would adequately reflect the status of the central institutions". (103) To call such institutions polytechnics would not help, for that would change little: "the discrepancies in funding, infrastructure and support for research had to be rectified." (104)

The response to Cuming's proposal was mixed. Bone could see that it was a clear attempt to avoid recruitment difficulties, especially for the CIs, whose portfolio overlapped with universities most closely; but he "had some doubts about how a federation would operate and wondered whether the government would accept all Scottish higher education of university status and fund it accordingly". (105) Interestingly, however, he could see that the federation would accord with the Council's provisional acceptance of a planning and funding model which involved sub-committees for the university sector on the one hand and the non-university sector on the other. The proposed non-university sub-committee could be the governing body of a federation "which would reduce the self-interest of individual institutions and would increase the incentive for rationalisation". (106) Gray agreed, but questioned whether university designation was as important as the creation of an entity that was "well funded, flexible, influential and authoritative". (107)

However, there was little support from other members of the Council. The two industrialists, Harper and Biggart, were worried about a tendency to academic drift. Harper "did not believe that central institutions and colleges of education should combine as a university because their vocational emphasis would be endangered". And he wanted to see their emphasis continue "as a counter-balance to the existing universities". (108) The central institutions depended, he believed, on "their reputation not their status". Once it was confirmed that a change of title was considered essential and, following Cuming's argument, that the federation "should be funded on the same terms as existing universities", the Department's worries began to manifest and, in an impressive display of unity, they all, including the Secretary, raised questions. Wilson wondered if central institution principals would be willing to lose their institutional identity; Smith questioned whether a change of designation was really necessary on the grounds that institutional standing could be enhanced in other ways; and McLeod "thought it would be

premature to create the federation as a university". (109) Even the Chairman shared this concern.

The Council returned to the issue at its eighteenth meeting on 12 August 1985 with Cuming strongly advocating a single federal university as opposed to three regional ones, which would require three new universities and "would require mergers, which might prove difficult to achieve". (110) When Bone maintained again that university conditions of service would need to apply, Harper questioned whether the federation "would improve the cost-effectiveness of institutions". (111) Cuming argued that the increased costs of pay and conditions would be "balanced by savings from rationalisation". (112) Wilson's masterly summary both captured the prevailing disagreement but also exploited it to nudge the Council towards a solution acceptable to the Department. He concluded:

"... some members were doubtful about the merits of either a series of local federations of existing public sector institutions (in effect a polytechnic organisation) or a group of national federations on a subject basis. On the other hand, the Council did appear to favour the continuation of a distinctive public sector of higher education in Scotland, thus ruling out the straight incorporation of central institutions or colleges of education within neighbouring universities." (113)

Accordingly, Wilson undertook to bring a Departmental paper to the next meeting setting out the various options for the future organisation of the public sector. The resultant paper (114) identified the following five options:

1. incorporation within a neighbouring university;

2. regional federations (grouping institutions in perhaps three regional federations each with a single governing body);
3. functional federations (grouping institutions by type, eg technological institution, college of art, college of education, on a national basis);
4. an all-Scotland federation - "an organisation of all the institutions under one federal governing body, each institution retaining its Academic Board but the functions of the governing body taken over by a single federal body."
5. Status quo.

The paper then went on to propose that each option should be evaluated against the following criteria "identified from the Council's own discussions":

- "1. There should continue to be a sector distinct from the university sector, with essentially the same aims and functions as the present public sector. (115)
2. Any reorganisation must seek to preserve and enhance quality of education and training.
3. Any reorganisation should facilitate future rationalisation.
4. Establishment of any new organisation should not require additional resources.
5. Teacher training should continue to be taught in specialist colleges."

The Departmental paper concluded: "None of the options for change meets all the criteria. On the basis of the above analysis, option 1 would appear to be ruled out; option 4, with university status for the federation, amounts to a unitary system involving substantial additional costs; in options 2 and 3 the advantages and disadvantages are more finely balanced. In terms of meeting the five criteria, the status quo may, after all, be the preferred option." (116)

Remarkably, notwithstanding Cuming's strong preference for option 4, the meeting followed the line adopted in the SED paper: "In further discussion, some members indicated that they remained to be convinced that any major organisational change could produce a situation which was better than the status quo." (117) That was rendered in the final report as follows:

"Our conclusion is that none of the options which have been considered above constitutes an ideal model for the future organisation of the Scottish higher education system. While the status quo may not be regarded as perfect, . . . we are not convinced that the present organisation of the public sector does not provide a generally satisfactory basis on which to plan for the future. In our view, the case for radical change in organisation is not proven." (118)

While the discussion closed in that definitive way, a degree of uncertainty clearly existed as to whether or not sufficient had been done for the central institutions. It was agreed that "there might be a case for some form of closer linkage among the technological central institutions and perhaps for giving them some form of corporate designation". (119) It was out of that concern that the Chairman brought forward the eleventh hour suggestion of the Scottish Institute of Technology (SIT).

With time pressing, the Chairman wrote to members of the Council on 2 September indicating serious concern about the technological central institutions. He had been made aware, not least by the contribution from Cuming, that these institutions faced serious difficulties in the years ahead. They were acknowledged to be cost-effective institutions and were valued by the world of industry and commerce for their vocational and professional emphasis. Since their course portfolio overlapped most seriously with the universities, compared for instance to the specialist art colleges, they would surely lose out as the competition for students intensified. Something had to be done to raise their profile other than merely to recommend increased funding for research. The Chairman's letter stated:

"I do not believe we should simply make a recommendation of no change. The evidence of demand for technological graduates and diplomates, based on evidence from industry and in comparison with other countries, strongly indicates a need for a strengthening and growth in undergraduate and post-experience education in the vocational disciplines provided by the central institutions. As I read the view of the Council, the consensus is that university status is not the best route forward. Options 1 and 2 of the SED paper of 19 August (incorporation within universities and regional federations) have been decisively rejected." (120)

He went on to propose "for serious consideration a body called the Scottish Institute of Technology, involving the five technological central institutions plus the Scottish College of Textiles to be organised under arrangements bringing together their governors, chief officers and academic councils". (121)

It would be fair to say that the response to the Chairman's paper was lukewarm. Gray felt that the suggestion would reinforce "a three-tier system of higher

education: universities, technological central institutions, and other colleges, in that order". (122) Williams had some doubts about "separating the technological central institutions from the others if they were not to be accorded different status". Bone was not in favour of discrimination: "a single sub-committee of the proposed over-arching planning body should cover all the non-university institutions . . . and academic staff should share the same salary scales and conditions of service to show that all the institutions had the same standing". (123) A further difficulty was identified. It was part of the Chairman's proposal that the SIT should "award its own degrees but retain links with the CNAA". The Lindop Committee (124) on validation had just reported and set out a number of options for validation in the non-university sector. Of the models considered by Lindop the accreditation model seemed most appropriate. However, as Bone noted, some of the technological central institutions "might well aspire to accredited status, whether or not there was a Scottish Institute of Technology, as might other Scottish non-university institutions". (125)

Despite that cool reception, the Council went on to consider how the SIT might be organised, where its central offices would be located, the nature of the administrative support that would be required, the need for a clearing house for recruitment of students, and other related matters. At the meeting on 30 September, Cuming, who had been unable to attend the meeting on 6 September, expressed serious reservations about the initiative, particularly with regard to "the SIT's relationship to the planning and funding arrangements, and to its degree-awarding function". (126) It was "agreed that Cuming would discuss the SIT proposal further with the Chairman and that conclusions from their discussions would be incorporated in the next draft of Chapter 6". Cuming subsequently wrote to the Chairman to indicate that his reservations were such that he could not support it and favoured the recommendation that a feasibility study be undertaken into the SIT, a

view that the Chairman accepted and that subsequently became incorporated into the report.

The section on the SIT in the Council's report was a good deal more enthusiastic than the discussion in the Council would appear to justify. It was presented in the report as a planning mechanism to reduce duplication of provision and to ensure that individual institutions responded cost-effectively to the requirements of employers and students; as a means of distributing additional funds allocated for applied research; as an agent for co-ordinating industrial liaison and consultancy services; and as a mechanism for advertising courses to "maximise awareness of the technological opportunities afforded". (127) It was acknowledged, of course, that the SIT proposal "emerged at a later stage in our deliberations and would clearly require more detailed analysis and calculation". That recommendation showed the impact of Cuming's discussion with the Chairman, for what was proposed was not the creation of a SIT but rather "a deeper study of the feasibility of a SIT", an altogether more timid proposal.

The analysis of the interaction on the Council suggested that opinions on the future reorganisation of higher education were divided with variations of preference. The SED was able to exploit that by making a series of initiatives that pointed in the direction of protecting the status quo. The SIT proposal was a belated attempt to ensure that the report would produce more than a simple endorsement of existing arrangements.

The Planning and Funding of Higher Education in Scotland

Without question, the topic that took up most of the attention of the Council throughout its duration was the planning and funding of higher education in Scotland. In a sense, STEAC could be interpreted as a second bite at the cherry for the Scottish Office. It had attempted to rationalise higher education provision in the

non-university sector through CTES but, apart from a few adjustments in the governance of higher education, notably the transfer of two major institutions from local authority control to the status of central institutions, little came of that review. The creation of a national commission to review the whole of higher education, the first time since the Robbins Report of 1963, offered a new opportunity. However, the challenge was formidable, for it entailed the integration of separately managed and regulated sectors of higher education. It was entirely predictable, given the magnitude of the problem, that the question of integration would be deeply problematic. And so it proved.

As has been seen, no matter divided those submitting evidence more than the question of the creation of a single coherent system of higher education in Scotland. The majority of those making submissions took advantage of the opportunity to emphasise the importance of a unitary system. On the other hand, the universities and the huge body of support the universities obtained from a variety of different agencies vigorously defended the continued operation of the universities under the aegis of the UGC. Besides, the oral evidence provided further confirmation of the division between the two sides. Most of the non-university principals were committed to a unified system, even if the precise nature of the funding body was not completely agreed, and even if one or two principals, notably the Principal of Napier, preferred a binary system. For their part, the universities were strongly committed to the retention of the UGC link, with two of the principals - Alexander and Hills - favouring an arrangement which allowed some devolution to a Scottish sub-committee. Undoubtedly, a major test for the Council would be the extent to which it provided a solution to a major issue on which there was such fundamental disagreement.

The membership of the Council included representatives of these two positions. On the one hand were Cuming and Bone, and to a lesser extent the Chairman himself,

who were strongly committed to a unified system of higher education in Scotland and who saw in the introduction of a unified structure a way of addressing recurring difficulties and the creation of a rationally ordered system. On the other hand, the universities had vigorous advocates, principally in Williams and Gowenlock. For Williams, the retention of the link with the UGC was "the crucial issue for universities, which were reconciled to academic planning and co-ordination within Scotland but wanted to retain funding of research on a UK basis and to retain their international links". (128) Gowenlock doubted seriously whether "a Scottish funding body would be able to duplicate the long established close links with the research councils which the UGC enjoyed". (129) It was the complete integration of the Scottish universities with the UGC/research councils nexus that was to constitute such a major area of contention. As Gowenlock repeatedly pointed out, the Chairman of the Advisory Board for the Research Councils (ABRC) and assessors from each research council attended UGC meetings and contributed to discussions. There were also assessors from the research councils on all of the UGC sub-committees. That gave force to Gowenlock's claim that the Scottish universities were deeply enmeshed in the UGC network. It was his intransigent insistence on the imperative necessity to retain identification with this network that led Cuming to conclude: "If the universities' desire to maintain existing arrangements for funding meant that there could be no major reorganisation of Scottish higher education, STEAC's ability to fulfil its role was in question." (130)

The polarisation of views was reinforced by developments that took place within the life of the Council itself. In favour of a unified Scottish structure were two remarkable leading articles in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*. The first of these - entitled "Scotland's great debate" (131) - challenged the universities to abandon their allegiance to the status quo. It acknowledged that their great fear was that they "will be swamped by a tide of provincialism that could compromise their

international and national, ie British, status". The article reminded the universities that they had a need "to build themselves back into their communities". It sought to persuade them that their participation in Scotland's higher education system "would open up responsibilities for its reform, which will be blocked if their gaze remains fixed on London". They held the key to the successful resolution of the remaining issues concerning the future direction of the CIs and the vulnerability of the colleges of education. If they retained their self-confidence, there could be established a Scottish Grants Committee and the creation of "a system that would be both better planned and more free".

The second article - entitled "It's up to Scotland" (132) - again referred to the importance of STEAC "not just for the benefit of the universities themselves but also because of their impact on higher education in Scotland and, indeed, in the UK". It referred to the need for the universities to avoid adopting "a one dimensional British view of their responsibilities" and encouraged them to "give renewed emphasis to the Scottish dimension of their work". That was not just "misty nationalism" but was a response to the UGC's threat to embark on a radical process of selectivity of research funding and rationalisation of departments "that will change the face of British universities".

If writing of this kind lent support to the members of STEAC committed to change, other public documents reinforced the status quo. In the course of the Council's deliberations the Green Paper on future strategy for higher education appeared and was heavily committed to the maintenance of two separate sectors of higher education. It specifically rejected the idea of "an overarching body for higher education in England or, indeed, in Britain as a whole". Not surprisingly, the UGC and the NAB, whose own reviews had been fed into the Green Paper, also reinforced the status quo. At its very first meeting, the Council had received the advice of the Chairman of the UGC, who had emphasised his allegiance to the

binary system. Indeed, the general thrust of the early discussions with the UGC and with the NAB made it clear that "both the UGC and the NAB would welcome the establishment of a Scottish public sector body, operating from a similar power base to themselves". The UGC and NAB were particularly concerned to establish satisfactory arrangements for carrying out transbinary reviews of subject areas where Scotland's public sector had to be included. (133) These discussions also revealed that the UGC and the NAB encountered difficulties "in dealing with SED", precisely because "the latter was a government department". They would prefer an equivalent body in Scotland, independent of government, to which they could relate "on equal terms". (134)

The meeting with the ABRC provided further reinforcement of the UGC link. Kingman, of SERC, maintained that "it would be more difficult for the research councils to articulate with a Scottish university system funded separately from the UGC". He also asked whether it was intended that the dual support system should apply to central institutions and whether the suggestion that all HE institutions should have equal opportunity to undertake research. That appeared to imply that CIs should have the same unit of resource as universities and, if that was the case, "it would be important to establish where the additional resources would come from". If there was to be an adjustment of funding in that way "it might represent a threat to support for universities under unified Scottish funding". (135)

With such deeply entrenched divisions, how was an impasse to be avoided? Fortunately, there were some issues on which there was agreement. Both sets of protagonists agreed that the status quo was unsatisfactory. As has been seen, Cuming and his fellow defenders of an integrated system were heavily critical of existing arrangements. The defenders of the UGC link, despite their strong allegiance to their conception of Scotland's universities as members of an international community, fully accepted that a degree of co-ordination and planning

in the provision of higher education in Scotland was essential. Williams himself was obliged to recognise this fact when he stated that "nearly three-quarters of the students attending Scottish universities have been trained within a school system which is fundamentally different from that of the rest of the UK". (136) What form might that co-ordination take, and might that co-ordination constitute a rational alternative to full-scale repatriation?

The first possibility to be considered was the "co-ordinating committees", which the SED had established for planning the work in the central institutions. Smith of the SED had prepared a paper on the co-ordinating committees. Bone's reaction to the paper was that "arrangements for course approval were mostly made behind the scenes in discussion between SED and the college concerned". (137) In reply, Smith stressed that the function of the committees was to avoid duplication and that they had no academic role, such judgements being made by validating bodies. Williams expressed surprise that business and community interests were not represented on the committees. In Bone's view the co-ordinating committees might work well but they did not provide an appropriate model for the whole of Scottish higher education "because control rested with SED". (138) While these criticisms were made of the co-ordinating committees it was acknowledged by members of the Council that "the existing arrangements for exchange of information with the universities had not worked". Wilson used the term "inadequate", mainly because the machinery was such that, in the event of potential duplication of courses, "pressure could be exerted on the non-university sector only". (139) Even Williams agreed that "central direction was required if resources were to be used properly", (140) and acknowledged that "the annual exchange of information with SED was unsatisfactory and inadequate". (141) And, indeed, Smith himself felt obliged to admit that "in recent years the Department has exchanged information with the Scottish universities on an annual basis. It must, however, be said that the

exercise has not been an unqualified success." (142) It did not therefore appear that a modified approach to the co-ordinating committees was the answer.

As the Council took forward its thinking on alternatives to co-ordinating committees, Williams, having acknowledged that there was a need for some national co-ordination, suggested that a Scottish sub-committee of the UGC might combine with representatives of the other Scottish higher education institutions to consider the planning of the system. Developing that point, Bone (143) suggested that, if a single funding body for the whole of Scottish higher education was too difficult, it might, as a second choice, be worth having "the existing dual funding system accommodated under a single Scottish planning body". Below the single body there would be on the one side a Scottish body representing the UGC, and on the other a mainly academic body representing the Scottish non-university sector. Scottish universities would continue to be funded through the UGC from DES and the non-university sector would continue to be funded from SED, but funds would be allocated by subject area, not by institutions.

Against that, Wilson reminded the Council that ministers had rejected the recommendation by the CTES for an executive body covering the non-university sector and had established STEAC as an advisory body including both sectors. (144) Gowenlock could not see how, under Bone's scheme, the research councils could participate fully in the Scottish academic planning process. And Williams urged the committee to retain the link with the UGC "in which Scottish universities are able to attract a better than average share of research funds". That was the only way in which support for research could be maintained, precisely because it was fully integrated into the UGC's planning procedures through representation of research councils on the UGC subject sub-committees. The Scottish universities by themselves could not sustain an equivalent peer review system and therefore they would be in danger of losing their share of resources.

In the light of these discussions, Wilson presented a Departmental paper, "intended to be objective as far as possible", setting out "a range of possible options for planning and funding of higher education". (145) The options ranged from no change at the one extreme, to a radical option involving a single planning and funding body for all Scottish higher education. The fifth option, funding of universities on the Northern Ireland model, had not already been discussed by STEAC but had been included for the benefit of completeness. The options were as follows:

- Option 1: no change
- Option 2: A planning and funding body for the non-university sector only
- Option 3: A joint planning body for the university and non-university sectors
- Option 4: A two-tier planning arrangement: a single Scottish planning body with two separate funding bodies, one for universities, the other for non-universities
- Option 5: The Northern Ireland model
- Option 6: A joint planning and funding body

The options paper stimulated significant discussion. With regard to the first, Cuming considered that "there was not merely a gap in academic planning across the sectors but a chasm". (146) After discussion, it was agreed that that option was unacceptable because of the need for change within Scotland and the influence of developments outside it.

As far as option 2 was concerned, Bone indicated that "not everyone was satisfied with the existing arrangements whereby SED undertook both planning and funding functions for the non-university sector as decisions were not taken openly and to agreed principles". (147) It was noted that this option would still leave two sources

of funding for higher education in Scotland and the Chairman, indeed, wondered whether the Scottish body would be regarded as subordinate to the NAB. For its part, option 3 was criticised on the grounds that "separate responsibility for planning and funding did not promote efficient use of resources". (148) Cuming and Gray thought that the option would be "unworkable and largely cosmetic". (149) The same disadvantage applied to option 4, which, moreover, involved additional bureaucracy. However, Bone thought that authoritative advice from such a body would be effective in time. (150) The Chairman regarded the option as a compromise solution but considered that it needed to be discussed when Williams was present because of its similarity to his preferred scheme. (151) He himself thought that there could be "outright conflict between the different bodies involved". Opinion on option 5 was also divided. Cuming considered that it demonstrated that universities did not require funding directly from the UGC to retain adequate support for research, while for Williams it was "a foreseeable disaster".

Finally, in setting out the thinking behind option 6, Wilson indicated that it was designed to secure complete co-ordination of both planning and funding arrangements in a single agency. It envisaged that close links would be retained with the research councils as well as the continued involvement of the Scottish universities in the UGC subject committee structure. While there seemed no theoretical difficulty about an arrangement of the sort proposed, "further discussion with the UGC would no doubt be desirable". Cuming thought the option was *prima facie* attractive. (152) It was recognised, however, that it would be necessary to invite the UGC to comment on these options, particularly on option 6. It was also agreed that Williams, who had been unable to attend the key meeting, would be invited to offer his observations. This Williams did in a long submission in which he indicated that "the Scottish universities are unlikely to accept the transfer of their funding from the UGC to the Scottish Office on the

grounds that their role in pure research would be diminished by loss of access to a large pool of world-class resources, intellectual as well as material." (153)

He proposed instead the establishment of a Scottish Institution for Tertiary Studies (SIFTS). This body would be responsible for non-degree as well as degree courses and would have a charter with the right to confer degrees. Secondly, there would be established a body called The Scottish Tertiary Education Grants Committee (STEGC), which would be composed of representatives of SIFTS, Scottish community and business interests, and the SED. It would be the Scottish analogue of the NAB and would be responsible for the funding of the constituent members of SIFTS. A third new body proposed was STEAC Mark II, which would be more aptly called The Council for Higher Education in Scotland. It would act as the link between the UGC and the STEGC, with responsibility for the deployment of academic resources according to national needs. The DES would continue to fund the UGC and the SED would fund STEGC. The UGC would fund Scottish universities, while STEGC would fund SIFTS. In that way, there would be a national co-ordination while, at the same time, the universities would retain their links with the UGC and the research councils.

The UGC's comments on the options began by rehearsing the advantages experienced by the UGC in establishing very good working relationships with the NAB and the WAB. (154) The three bodies had in common that they were not government departments and had, in practice, considerable decision-making powers. "With this in common, it is easy for them to do business together." The UGC indicated that it would work most effectively with a Scottish body that had broadly the same responsibility as the NAB and the WAB. For that reason, it favoured option 2 among the options presented to STEAC. It went on to refer to the difficulties that would be created if "an advisory body responsible to one Secretary of State attempted to do business on equal terms with another Secretary of

State". It believed that, already, the Scottish universities were well placed to present "a collective Scottish universities' view" through the Committee of the Courts of Scottish Universities in Scotland. Finally, the UGC claimed that it would "regret any arrangements that were complicated to administer and which cut across existing clear lines of responsibility". For these reasons, the UGC would not support options 4 and 5. In its strategy advice, the committee argued that it would be disadvantageous for the Scottish universities to be separated from the other universities in Great Britain. For this reason, the UGC would be opposed to option 4 and even more to option 6. There would be an additional problem under option 6 of arranging for the UGC Subject Sub-committees to serve both their own committee and the Secretary of State for Scotland.

In a subsequent letter, Swinnerton-Dyer wrote:

"It does not seem to me feasible for the sub-committees to play one role in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, advising a body with which they have close links, while they play a quite different one in Scotland, advising another body with which their links would necessarily be much more tenuous I do not see how the UGC could function in one way in three countries and in another way in the fourth. In brief, therefore, if option 6 depends on being able to make use of the advice of the UGC subject sub-committees, then I do not think it would be possible to make it work." (155)

The Chairman of STEAC took issue with Swinnerton-Dyer, arguing that "an overarching body of some sort may well be required because the Scottish Office, unlike the DES in England, does not have responsibility for both sectors Despite what you say, and the advice we have from Professor Gowenlock, we still have difficulty in understanding why the peer review functions of the UGC subject

sub-committees could not continue to involve Scottish universities and thus offer advice to a Scottish planning and funding body as well as informing the UGC's decisions." (156)

Williams responded to the option paper by setting out a number of safeguards for Scottish universities which he believed would have to be guaranteed before the universities would support transfer of funding from the UGC. These were:

- "(a) Universities must retain their autonomy.
- (b) A QUANGO must relieve the higher education system of political pressure from the government: the head and the secretariat of this QUANGO must be independent.
- (c) The funds transferred from the UGC to Scotland must be equal to the UGC's allocation to Scottish universities at the time of transfer. Thereafter, funding for Scottish universities should be maintained in proportion to universities in England and Wales.
- (d) Scotland would have to be included in a UK peer review system like the current UGC subject sub-committees. Scotland could not sustain its own peer review system; indeed, the scope of the existing UGC sub-committees ought to be extended beyond the UK in some cases. The UGC might not wish to maintain adequate peer review of Scottish universities if it no longer funded them.

- (e) Pure research must continue in Scottish universities; this research was of fundamental importance to the community.
- (f) The dual support system, with direct access to research councils, must be retained. While the proportion of funds for research allocated through the research councils might increase, the research councils would still insist on adequate support being available through recurrent grant before they would allocate funds for research projects.
- (g) If responsibility for validation of Scottish non-university courses were to be confined to Scotland, universities would wish to be involved.
- (h) The international dimension and commitment of Scottish universities must not be put in jeopardy." (157)

Williams provided a gloss on each of these. For example, in connection with the first he indicated that it was bound up with "the universally accepted fact that universities are sanctuaries where persons can speak their minds without fear or favour". In connection with the third, on the transfer of funds, he commented that "it is unlikely that such a copper-bottom guarantee can be given". At the end of the list, he admitted that there would be "sufficient doubt over exacting guarantees of so many of these safeguards as to ensure, at least for the next several years, the active opposition of universities and, I think, the senior learned societies to any proposals along the lines of option 6". He concluded the paper by maintaining that "the educational interests of Scotland would be best served by proposing a Scottish higher education planning council on the understanding that its effectiveness could

be reviewed by 1990 to ascertain whether transbinary funding should become an additional responsibility".

Cuming believed that Williams's fears were "illusory". (158) He claimed that "STEAC could not confine its attention to the non-university sector, which is what it would be doing if it acceded to the universities' apparent determination to retain their existing privileges." He then proceeded to comment on Williams's paper as follows:

- "(a) Universities could not be fully autonomous when they received most of their funds from the government. It was inappropriate to refer to universities as 'sanctuaries', as Sir Alwyn had done; their main function should be to train students for employment, to encourage ideas and to serve the professions.
- (b) No QUANGO could be capable of rebuffing political pressure, only of modifying it.
- (c) Whatever system was adopted future levels of funding could not be guaranteed and it would be wrong to envisage a constant proportion of funds for any group of institutions.
- (d) Continued peer review of Scottish universities by UGC sub-committees need not be incompatible with different funding arrangements.

- (e) The role of universities in research need not be maintained in its traditional form but should be subject to critical examination for its contemporary value.
- (f) Direct access to research council funds should be retained for universities and improved for other institutions.
- (g) Validation of non-university courses by Scottish universities in preference to the wider CNAA system would be retrogressive and unacceptable.
- (h) The international dimension of Scottish universities was not impaired by their geographical location or the separate Scottish educational system and it would not be threatened by joint planning and funding from within Scotland."

He concluded that: "If the Scottish universities were the assets to the community and the economy that they were claimed to be, they ought to have nothing to fear from the establishment of a unitary higher education system." (159)

When the committee turned to the discussion of the safeguards it was agreed that the freedom of the universities was not threatened by option 6 and Cuming suggested that "autonomy should be qualified as independence to operate within an agreed framework laid down by an academic planning body". (160) Summing up the discussion at the meeting, Wilson suggested that it ought to be possible to ensure most of the safeguards proposed by Williams. (161) The Chairman's own summary then indicated that options 1, 2 and 5 had been discarded; that option 4 was preferable to option 3; and therefore that options 4 and 6 should be examined further. Gowenlock formally recorded that the UGC favoured option 2 but

members emphasised that this option had been rejected by the Secretary of State when proposed by CTES.

When the Council returned to evaluate options 4 and 6 in more detail, Cuming argued strongly against option 4. From his point of view, it should be rejected for three reasons: "First, it was complicated. Second, a single funding body was simplest because separate sources of funds for similar functions would inhibit co-ordination and the removal of anomalies. Third, option 4 assumed that different sectors of higher education in Scotland would continue to exist and so excluded any reorganisation." (162) Opinion was divided on the committee as follows: Williams, McLeod, Smith, and Bone favoured option 4; Cuming, Harper, Gray, and Biggart preferred option 6. Bone summarised the discussion as follows: "There appeared to be a consensus for introducing option 4, moving to option 6 subject to certain conditions, and there might be majority support for introducing option 6." It was agreed that in subsequent drafting all six options would be set out, together with the reasons for rejecting options 1, 2, 3 and 5.

Conscious that time was passing and that an initiative was required, the Chairman, clearly working under pressure, (163) wrote to members on 2 September on two important matters. The first was the proposal for the establishment of the SIT and the second concerned the funding arrangements. He made it clear that "if we are to meet our target date of submission by the end of October, we need to reach firm conclusions on two major issues at Friday's meeting". With regard to the second of these matters, he wrote as follows:

"The main objections to a move to option 6 concerns the very legitimate feelings of the Scottish universities that their research funding and status would be reduced. I think these concerns have to be recognised. It is certainly true that UK or wider assessment of

capability is essential, particularly as we move into the area of selective funding, but a Scottish higher education council could greatly assist in this I therefore think we should consider most seriously recommending option 6, while accepting its implementation cannot be immediate, but that a Scottish higher education council be set up forthwith which will carry out planning negotiations and preparation for the transfer of funding responsibility at the earliest practicable date." (164)

Members of the committee were invited to submit comments in advance of the meeting and Biggart wrote to say that "I find it very hard to discard the majority view of the universities and their principals that university research would be imperilled if the Scottish universities were directly funded by SED or a new planning/funding body, mainly on account of isolation from the UK peer review system. Their misgivings are supported by very respectable evidence." (165)

The meeting that took place on 6 September turned into a disappointing one for the Chairman. He began the discussion by confirming his preference for option 6, with immediate establishment of a planning and funding body, and Harper agreed. (166) Bone, for his part, preferred the initial establishment of a planning body alone, with subsequent transfer of funding set aside for further consideration. (167) Smith took a similar view, fearing that the balance in the allocation of research funds might be disturbed. He did not want anything which would prevent the Scottish universities retaining access to the maximum available resources. Gray believed that if a decision on funding was deferred "it would never be implemented". (168) Williams repeated his view on the dangers to the research funding of the universities if funding was transferred to the SED. "He was wholly in favour of the immediate establishment of a planning body whose success would be reviewed in due course, at which stage the need for a transfer of funding

responsibility would be considered." (169) The Chairman disagreed, believing that, if a planning body were unsuccessful, the government would be even less likely than at present to add responsibility for funding. He therefore favoured "a clear commitment to joint funding from the outset". (170) His central point was that a recommendation for a deferred decision on funding would achieve little. Indeed, "the chances were that the decision would be deferred indefinitely". In his view, the alternative to a recommendation on which a transfer of funding responsibilities for the Scottish universities was a firm aim was a recommendation for a planning body only. At that point, Williams entered his caveat that "if the majority felt that was the case the report should recommend a planning and funding body and he could register his dissent". (171)

That threat generated consensus, since all members of the Council "were agreed on the importance of maintaining the Scottish universities' access to a UK-based peer review system and research council funds. It was therefore agreed that the Council report would make its recommendation for a planning and funding body conditional on the achievement of both requirements and that the UGC review committee would be asked to consider how they might be met. As a first stage, however, a new body with responsibility for academic planning of all higher education in Scotland would be recommended for establishment without delay." (172)

The civil servant deputising for Wilson interpreted the meeting on 6 September in the following way: "A well scripted double act by Gowenlock and Sir Alwyn Williams frustrated the Chairman's wish to move straight to a recommendation for the creation of a joint planning and funding body. Sir Alwyn played the minority report card. He would have to register his dissent unless the Council recommended a planning body first." (173)

It was clear, however, that the concerns experienced by Williams continued to be unallayed as the various drafts were submitted for comment by members of the Council. He therefore wrote to the Chairman indicating that, unless the wording was changed to accommodate his own view, he would be submitting a minority report "along the lines of the accompanying draft". (174) He set out two reasons for rejecting the establishment of a planning and funding body. Firstly, he did not think that a planning council only (option 4) "would be ineffectual if it did not also control the allocation of funds". That is, he saw the value of establishing a planning council per se. Secondly, he maintained that "an option 6 council would not be equipped to resolve any conflict of interest" with regard to research "without recourse to the UGC or its successor". He therefore recommended "the immediate establishment of a planning council set out in option 4, and of an enquiry into the practicalities of introducing the safeguards" that had been mentioned in the Council's discussion. "If the planning council proved to be ineffectual and all safeguards could be met, a planning and funding body should be established without delay." (175)

Pressure of that kind helped to ensure that a compromise was reached. A majority of the Council, and certainly "a significant body of opinion in Scotland", favoured the establishment of a Scottish Higher Education Planning and Funding Council. However, it was necessary to take account of the serious concerns expressed by the universities that they might be removed from the UK-wide system of funding through the UGC. The fear was expressed that funding through the Scottish Office might take the Scottish universities out of the UK peer review system, thereby weakening the safeguards of their research activities and, at the same time, inhibiting their access to research council funds provided by the DES and other grants administered on a UK-basis. The SERC and the ESRC also saw "practical difficulties in assessing research capabilities and allocating grants under a system in which the Scottish universities were separated from the UGC". They confirmed

that any reduction in research funding through recurrent grant would affect universities' ability to compete for research council grants. (176) "We accept that if such were the consequences of the implementation of option 6 the standing of the Scottish universities in the UK and internationally would be put at risk. We would not wish this to happen."

In accepting option 6, the Council was aware of the need for safeguards and these were identified as follows:

- "(i) A satisfactory UK-based peer review system for teaching and research in the Scottish universities.
- (ii) Adequate safeguards for the Scottish universities in relation to access to research council funding.
- (iii) Agreement within the government of a satisfactory transfer of funds from the DES to the Secretary of State for Scotland's expenditure block." (177)

With regard to (i) above, the Council recommended that the Croham Committee, (178) which had been established to review the UGC, should be invited to consider how a UK peer review system could be maintained, and with regard to (ii), the Council recommended that the ABRC should be invited to consider, in the light of the Croham review, what measures, if any, might be necessary to safeguard continued access by the Scottish universities to research council funds. It was acknowledged that condition (iii) was a matter for the government.

It is clear, therefore, that in the end the most crucial recommendation of the STEAC was a compromise. A huge body of public and professional opinion favoured the

establishment of a single body with responsibility for the planning and funding of an integrated system of higher education in Scotland. On the other hand, the universities, which fully acknowledged the need for greater co-ordination in the provision of Scottish higher education, were anxious to retain their links with the UK system upon which they felt their academic standing depended. The universities were also aware that the transbinary discussions that had been initiated in England excluded them and, worse still, there was no agency in Scotland, parallel to the NAB, with which they could collaborate in discussions about Scottish higher education. A solution had to be found, therefore, which involved the universities in planning on an integrated basis but which recognised the universities' need to remain part of a UK system. For their part, the non-university institutions and their supporters were committed to a single planning and funding framework, believing that, in that way, they could secure funding equity with the universities. Without the agreement of the universities, the realisation of that objective would have been impossible.

Compromises in public policy are frequently derided as "shabby" or "unprincipled". The STEAC compromise does not perhaps deserve such an epithet. As was fully recognised, most of all by Scott's series of leading articles in the *THES*, it was vitally important to secure the agreement of the universities: they held the key to the integration of higher education in Scotland. There were two ways in which that support could have been achieved. The first was to acquiesce in the Williams compromise of establishing a planning agency and moving towards a planning and funding agency after a number of years. Members of the Council, such as Bone, were inclined to that view. The Chairman worked hard for, and secured, the alternative compromise, which committed the universities to a planning and funding body from the outset, provided certain conditions were met. It is significant, perhaps, that some members of the Council - notably Cuming and Wilson - considered that these conditions could be met without much difficulty.

Certainly, in the subsequent discussion, most universities considered that the so-called guarantees could not be delivered and, for that reason, expressed a preference for option 3. The fact that the compromise engineered by McCallum was open to such conflicting interpretations suggests it had at least some validity.

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163. Some evidence of the pressure under which McCallum felt himself to be working is obtained from the handwritten note in File JMJ/5/1, Part 6, in which McCallum writes as follows:

"If we recognise that planning and funding are inextricably linked, we must ask ourselves what is to be gained by going only half-way in the first instance. If our conclusion is that there is little to be gained we must favour option 6. Urge members to consider this seriously and be aware of the dangers of the half-way house approach. Government inertia in reaching stage 2. Opportunity for a rearguard action from UGC and others who do not like it. Criticism for failure to seize the moment and opportunity to influence fundamental review of UGC. There may be no time like the present to be courageous."
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CHAPTER 5: THE RESPONSE TO THE STEAC REPORT

Introduction

It has been acknowledged that the establishment of a national committee to review and report on a matter of significant public interest performs a variety of functions. It is a method of ensuring that there is an intensive examination of an issue in which all perspectives are explored with a view to identifying an appropriate solution; it is a consensus-building device, a way of ensuring that public policy in a democratic society is not only well grounded but carries a reasonable degree of public support; and it is a way in which politicians, for whatever motive, seek to defer a decision. Whichever of these interpretations is valid, it is an important feature of the process that when a national report appears it is the focus of consultation and a period of intensive public discussion of the issue ensues.

Predictably, then, when George Younger, the Secretary of State for Scotland, announced the publication of the STEAC report on 9 December 1985 he informed the House of Commons that he wished to receive comments on the report before decisions were taken on the Council's recommendations and set 27 March 1986 as the deadline for the receipt by the SED of observations on the report. In addition, in line with the STEAC recommendations, he intimated that, with the agreement of the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and for Northern Ireland, Lord Croham's committee, set up on 25 July 1985 to review the UGC, had been invited "to consider in relation to their terms of reference the implications of adopting the STEAC recommendations concerning the planning and funding of higher education in Scotland, having regard in particular to the concern expressed in the STEAC report that continued access by the Scottish universities to a UK-based peer-review system would be desirable". (1)

The consultation period that followed the ministerial announcement was marked by an unprecedented public and professional debate on higher education in Scotland. 347 submissions were received by the SED and form part of the public record; in addition, it has been possible to trace in excess of 130 references in the local and national press, as well as in professional journals, taking the form of reports on submissions made to the SED, leading articles, letters to the editor, and interviews with members of the higher education community and others. That corpus of critical commentary provides the evidential base for the analysis contained in this chapter.

At the press conference launching the report the Council's chair, Donald McCallum, made it clear that the primary concern of the report was the quality of the education to be provided for those still at school and who would be the beneficiaries of an expanded range of opportunities in higher education which the report sought to recommend. As for the various interest groups in higher education he "did not expect to please everyone". (2) He was not to be disappointed. On the one hand the report was enthusiastically welcomed for its radical ebullience in the following terms:

"The report of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council, *Future Strategy for Higher Education in Scotland*, is an impressive report which not only writes certainly an important chapter in the history of Scottish higher education but also probably an influential footnote in that of British higher education. It makes radical recommendations, far more radical than many observers had predicted . . ." (3)

The same report was roundly castigated on the other hand for its timidity in words that are correspondingly disparaging:

"STEAC failed to take advantage of its unique opportunity

The purpose of higher education is assumed rather than considered and is perceived in over-narrow terms. Nor, except in the brief references to the possibility of a federation of technological colleges, is any disposition shown towards change of institutional structure. We believe that the existing arrangements should have been subjected to more critical analysis and the alternatives more fully considered." (4)

In between these extremes the report attracted the range of responses - praise, opprobrium, anger, frustration, incredulity - that a report on any social concern of any degree of complexity is bound to attract.

The Press Reaction

The immediate reaction of the press gave an indication of the diversity of responses and also presaged the issues that were to dominate the consultative process. *The Times* and *The Guardian* gave brief factual accounts of the report's publication, although the former ventured the suggestion that it would lead to "a bitter debate", (5) and the Guardian's headline - "Scottish university cash plan" - may have misled the unwary. (6) The editorials of the Scottish quality press expressed a guarded welcome for the report, as Bone has shown. (7) *The Scotsman* sought to whet the appetite for controversy by running on the day prior to publication two profiles of key university protagonists. Hills of Strathclyde was portrayed as "the supporter of change" (8) having tired of "fighting against a Whitehall group that is unaccountable and inaccessible"; Burnett of Edinburgh, "defending the status quo", preferred "a stronger UGC" on the grounds that "the SED has no knowledge or experience of universities at all". However, its editorial (9) did not live up to expectations, anticipating merely that "there will be

considerable resistance to the repatriation of the universities" and finding the report "eminently reasonable and cogent". *The Glasgow Herald* appeared grateful that "academic devolution is a live issue again". (10) It saw one of the advantages of repatriation being a reduction of duplication within Scottish tertiary education as a whole; and claimed that "a measure of autonomy would, at worst, be an improvement on the present strained system and, at best, would present opportunities for genuine rationalisation as opposed to the crude retrenchment of recent years". *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland*, for its part, saw the report as a victory for the supporters of devolution: "In a small country it makes sense to plan higher education as a single unit." (11) However, it expected no speedy implementation, since the report had recommended that the future of the college of education system, a difficult political issue, had to be settled before national machinery for higher education was established.

The news pages of these same newspapers followed the tabloids and the provincial press in highlighting the difficulties facing the colleges of education. *The Glasgow Herald* announced on page 1 "Three colleges face closure" and speculated which these might be. (12) *The Scotsman* agreed with that assessment. (13) *The Dundee Courier* headlined "Axe threat for teacher training colleges", (14) and feared that Dundee College might become "a shuttered sepulchre". (15) *The Press and Journal* referred to a "fundamental" attack on the college system, (16) and *The Daily Record* continued the language of doom with "Crisis in education: shake-up threat to colleges". (17)

The most articulate analysis of the report was provided in a series of articles in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*. The first of these trumpeted "Good news from Scotland". (18) The report was seen as an attempt "to impose order on (the) turmoil" of higher education in Scotland, with universities becoming disenchanted with UGC; the CIs "anachronistically" subject to "the detailed

tutelage of SED"; and colleges of education denied opportunities for diversification and engaged "in a dour battle for viability". The report was praised for remaining "rooted in the reality of Scotland's present system"; and for offering a judicious balance of radicalism and conservatism. Its conservatism was seen to lie in its rejection of mergers and "polytechnic-style amalgamations" and its radicalism in its proposal to transfer responsibility for the universities from the DES to Scotland under a single council embracing all of higher education in Scotland, having rejected "half-way house solutions" like a Scottish sub-committee of the UGC or a weak overarching body without funding responsibilities.

A second article from the same pen heralded the transfer of power "from London to Edinburgh". (19) It postulated an explicit choice for the universities: by "an act of courageous foresight" they could create a new beginning for higher education in Scotland; alternatively, "by an act of complacent cowardice they could condemn higher education in Scotland to a decade of bickering attrition and unplanned decline". The universities were encouraged to opt for the former path, since they alone held the key: if they decided to repatriate, other STEAC recommendations, such as the strengthening of the college of education system through rationalisation and the enhancement of central institutions, would be much less difficult to achieve. Finally, in a third article, STEAC was congratulated for recommending radical change, for creating a structure within which institutions could play their traditional roles, but for giving Scottish higher education "its most dramatic upheaval for a century". (20)

In line with the focus of the study itself, the analysis of the responses will concentrate on three matters: institutional roles and their interrelationships; the planning and funding of higher education; and the proposed contraction of the college of education system. The analysis will follow that sequence not because it is logical or because it implies an order of priority - for the second is surely of

paramount importance - but because that sequence reflects in ascending order the volume and vociferousness of the reaction the report's recommendations evinced.

Institutional Roles and Interrelationships

Despite being invited "to explore all options, however radical" (21) the Council concluded that "the case for radical change in organisation is not proven", (22) and concluded by endorsing the existing tripartite system. There is no doubt that that endorsement of current practices struck a powerful chord. It would, indeed, have been surprising if it did not, for the evidence emphatically pointed to the acceptability of the tripartite arrangements of universities, central institutions and colleges of education. While there were many submissions which argued for a regional or some other form of federation, with or without university involvement, these could not be said to outweigh the volume of support for the tripartite system. The Council's recommendations on this issue were warmly welcomed because they told an audience what it wanted to hear.

The warmth of the welcome the Council's recommendations on institutional roles and relationships received was appropriate for another reason. There was suspicion that, only two years after he had rejected the CTES recommendation, the Secretary of State should establish STEAC and should ensure that, on this occasion, the universities were included in the review. Transbinary mergers were anticipated to feature. STEAC's relatively assured acceptance of the status quo must have been an occasion for substantial relief. The system would be spared the "mergermania" that characterised higher education reform elsewhere, as well as the profoundly dislocating changes that accompany major academic restructuring. In recognition of this endorsement of the existing institutional pattern of higher education, responses were couched in language that was complimentary and congratulatory. Indeed, only one response - from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art - expressed reservations on the tripartite system, insisting that "there is much to commend the

notion of establishing regional groupings of public sector institutions with neighbouring universities" and "it is a matter for regret that that possibility was so readily dismissed". (23)

There was less unanimity on the three specific recommendations by STEAC on the roles of institutions and their interrelationship - the allocation of funds to central institutions for research; the Scottish Institute of Technology; and the monotechnic principle in teacher education. The first of these was predictably warmly welcomed by all of the central institutions and by their collective body, COPADOCI, not only because it would "serve to strengthen the quality of the work of these institutions" (24) but also because it represented a move in the direction of "greater equalisation between the sectors". (25) However, the proposal was severely criticised by the university principals and vice-chancellors. (26) Having welcomed the clear statement of the "separate and distinctive role of the universities and the public sector institutions", they expressed regret "if increased funding to the central institutions for support for research were associated with a reduction in the capacity of the universities to undertake research". In their individual responses, and obviously as a result of prior agreement, the universities made emphatic statements in support of that position. Dundee University (27), Heriot-Watt University (28), St Andrews University (29), and the University of Glasgow (30) all argued that "if research is to be developed in the central institutions there would be a loss of funding for the universities", while Edinburgh University maintained that such a switch of funding would be "exceedingly damaging to the universities" in relation to research council and other external funding. (31)

The STEAC proposal on a Scottish Institute of Technology received an ambivalent response. Only two of the central institutions expressed unqualified support for the proposal - Napier and the Scottish College of Textiles - as did the CNAA. COPADOCI acknowledged that there were "mixed views amongst the principals on

the proposal". (32) Two others, Glasgow College of Technology and Paisley, agreed to a feasibility study; two gave qualified support on the understanding that the new Institute would have university standing; and one agreed to the suggestion "but only if this change is accompanied by others of significance", (33) meaning by that university status and equal resources for equal work. However, there was vigorous opposition from other central institutions. Duncan of Jordanstone opposed it as "unimaginative", since it involved a "separation of design, creativity and imagination from the manufacturing process". (34) As far as Queen Margaret College was concerned, the SIT proposal, by neglecting the non-technological central institutions, introduced yet another binary divide within an already divided system. (35) Interestingly, Heriot-Watt University, conscious that the new SIT might challenge its own position as a technological university, opposed that recommendation on the grounds that it was "divisive". (36)

The STEAC's support for the continuing conduct of teacher education in "thriving specialist establishments", so strenuously advocated in the evidence, was widely acclaimed. (37) There were perhaps two explanations for the remarkable support that the colleges attracted. Firstly, easily the most controversial of the Council's recommendations, as will be discussed below, was the closure of three colleges. In taking issue with that recommendation - as they did in massive numbers - commentators launched their attack by invoking STEAC's own warm commendation of the work of the colleges and questioned whether such successful institutions, in the Council's own admission, should be treated in this way. Secondly, those working in the system and their allies in the wider profession were genuinely pleased to receive STEAC's glowing commendation of their work especially since, as James Scott of SED himself had stated, the colleges had survived a period of "continuous turmoil with cut after cut being imposed against the background of a very considerable political battle". (38) The STEAC evaluation of their efforts was a public attestation of their worth and the sense of gratification,

if not elation, found expression in a renewed professional assertiveness. The GTC's verdict captured the prevailing mood: "The Council notes with the utmost satisfaction the vote of confidence which STEAC has passed in the existing college of education system and in endorsing the monotechnic principle". (39)

However, that response was by no means unanimous. A large number of responses - disconcertingly large for those working in the college system - expressed serious reservations about the monotechnic principle. What was surprising was the range of institutions and bodies which expressed this particular reservation. The Royal Society of Edinburgh considered that "a more fundamental and thorough review should be carried out as a separate exercise to determine whether teacher training provided by the colleges is satisfactory, especially for university graduates", and questioned whether "the intellectual environment of the colleges is the most effective in which to conduct educational research". (40) The Education Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland argued for colleges of education to have a closer collaboration with universities "to provide a broad focus and avoid the weaknesses that attend too narrowly specialised institutions". (41) The Scottish Universities Council for Studies in Education was "sceptical about the desirability of the largely monotechnic nature of the colleges as at present organised", on the grounds that it would reinforce "a narrow conception of professionalism confined to schooling and classroom competence", and concluded that "it would be of greater service to the educational system and to the colleges themselves if they were more closely and organically linked with universities or central institutions, rather than being marginalised as at present". (42)

Other respondents took strong exception to the claim submitted in the evidence and reproduced in the report that teacher education suffers when it is incorporated within a larger institution. For example, the CNAA claimed:

"While recognising and respecting the particular circumstances obtaining in Scotland, the CNAA would strongly challenge the view that the experience elsewhere in the UK suggests that teacher training provided within polytechnic institutions tends to be treated as peripheral and to be given too low a priority in the allocation of funds." (43)

In similar vein, and in keeping with the territorial aspirations of its principal, Napier College contended as follows:

"The college disagrees with the report that the evidence shows that the integration of colleges of education and polytechnics in England and Wales is ineffective. The college believes that there are many examples of cases where polytechnics and colleges of education have been amalgamated and where there have been considerable advantages in freeing resources, opening up developments, and providing effective cross-fertilisation across disciplines. We see great potential advantages in bringing student teachers into technological institutions." (44)

And, echoing that point of view, the Association of College Registrars and Administrators, representative of the central institutions, affirmed that "there is little evidence to support a negative view of the incorporation of teacher training in polytechnics in England and Wales and the option of such arrangements in Scotland should remain open". (45)

While these observations were submitted by bodies that might not be regarded as allies of the colleges of education, it was significant that equally vigorous criticisms

were made by institutions much closer to home. The NAS/UWT considered that it is "educationally doubtful, as we move to the end of the century, to have the restricted school-college-school pattern". (46) The Secondary Heads Association believed that, while there may be a case for conducting teacher education in specialised institutions, "these institutions must have extremely strong links with universities", and went on to argue that it is desirable "that all people trained to be teachers should have experienced the university life with its breadths of subjects under one roof". (47) ADES and some of the regional authorities were extremely doubtful about the validity of the monotechnic principle. The submission from ADES claimed that "there is a body of opinion which sees the need for future teacher training arrangements to be more outward-looking in collaboration and possibly integrated with other sectors". It felt that "educational institutions of a monotechnic nature tend to be inflexible and slow to develop" and the continuation of teacher training in a monotechnic system "could result in further isolation and parochialism". (48) It was critical of the STEAC for not giving sufficient consideration to the concept of "developing closer links between pre-service training and in-service training provided by regional authorities", and it believed that there was a need for further "in-depth consideration to other future management options for teacher training arrangements prior to final decisions being made by the Secretary of State on STEAC". It proposed the establishment of a joint COSLA/SED Officers Group to be set up as a matter of urgency "to examine the resources at present used for teacher training and to propose more effective ways of utilising these resources . . . (and) to examine the present methods of governing teacher training institutions". (49) That response was identical to that provided by COSLA and Lothian Region, Fife and Tayside, although the last questioned whether or not "being a faculty in a more broadly based institution of higher education had been appropriately considered". (50)

The colleges of education themselves, supported by such groups as the academic staff union ALCES and the Committee of Principals, strongly supported the monotechnic principle. The single exception was Jordanhill College of Education which, true to its evidence, and to the line argued by its Principal throughout the STEAC deliberations, argued that "colleges of education should make closer relationships and/or amalgamation with an appropriate university" and regretted that the Council did not consider that "fundamental change was needed". (51) While, then, the range of opinion critical of the monotechnic principle was significant, all the more so because it did not feature prominently in the evidence submitted to STEAC, all of these submissions formed a very small part of the massive volume of support for preserving the college system, to be considered below.

National Planning and Funding of Higher Education

The university principals were not slow in making public their response to the report. On the day the report was published, Williams of Glasgow issued a personal statement identifying himself with the recommendations of the Council. The statement indicated that "Scottish universities were in danger of relegation now that the UGC was discussing rationalisation and co-operation with the public sector National Advisory Body, which had no counterpart in Scotland." In supporting the central recommendation he emphasised the crucial importance of the "three guarantees". (52) Watson of St Andrews publicly stated that Williams's statement had "sent an absolute shiver of dread through me. Each of his guarantees seems as strong as a cobweb." (53) He feared "the devolution plan could mean a decline in the international standing of Scotland's oldest university." (54) For McNicol of Aberdeen, the STEAC proposals amounted to "an unnecessary leap in the dark". He had "grave reservations about the dangers involved in being pulled away to a much smaller, closed inward-looking system". (55) He really questioned the wisdom of a policy which would "tear the Scottish universities away from the UK system, with all the risks that carries, in order to achieve co-ordination". (56)

Burnett of Edinburgh, in an article in *The Scotsman* on the day of the report's publication, strongly argued for adherence to the UGC and denied that under the UGC Scots universities had done worse than universities elsewhere. He had great fears if control passed from the UGC to the SED, which had "no knowledge or experience of universities at all". (57) While Johnston of Heriot-Watt indicated that there should be no change "at this stage". (58)

On the other hand, two principals took the opposite view. Hills of Strathclyde welcomed the report with the words, "This is not a revolutionary move against a highly stable body. I hope Scotland will be seen as a new stabilising force." (59) And Alexander of Stirling (60) strongly defended STEAC in these words: "The opportunities which Scottish Office control would give the Scottish universities are too important to be discarded because of a fear of change or doubt about the ability to maintain standards . . . and would place them more effectively within the distinctive Scottish educational system." (61)

The division of opinion amongst the principals was reflected in the response made by the Standing Committee of the Scottish Universities. It acknowledged that on the major issue there was "a spectrum of views among the universities". It welcomed the clear statement on "the separate and distinctive role of the universities and the public sector institutions". It went on to insist that "there is general agreement among the universities that it is essential to maintain a buffer agency between government and the university system. The question is whether the buffer should be a UK or a Scottish agency and, in funding terms, whether the source of funding should be the DES or the Scottish Office." It made much of the fact that, while the report itself was unwilling to recommend radical change, its preferred option 6 would, in the opinion of the universities, represent a radical departure. It went on: "There is a wish among all the universities for further investigation of improved arrangements for co-operation and there is considerable support for

arrangements on the lines of option 3 at this stage (a joint planning body for the university and non-university sectors)." (62)

The individual universities reflected this division of views. Strathclyde University heartily welcomed the recommendation for a single planning and funding body. Stirling University maintained that "the new body would locate the universities more effectively within the distinctive Scottish educational system" and enable them to "serve the social, cultural, industrial and commercial needs of Scotland more effectively". Besides, Stirling believed, "this could be done without prejudicing in any way the national and international standing of the universities". (63) Both Stirling and Strathclyde, however, insisted that their agreement was contingent upon the conditions set out in the STEAC report being met.

The other six universities demonstrated varying degrees of hostility. For example, the University of St Andrews maintained that loosening the links with the UGC would mean that "Scottish universities would be pressed to focus over-much on essentially Scottish issues at the expense of wider national and international pursuits." (64) It was suspicious that, if the universities moved to the control of the Scottish Office, the universities would lose out in the sense that they currently received 18% of university grants whereas, on a strict population basis, they would only be entitled to claim 9%-10%; moreover, it felt that the universities north and south of the border served to strengthen the unity of the United Kingdom by "the intermingling of young people from all parts of the country under conditions extremely favourable to lively discussion and mutual understanding". (65) The University of Dundee made an equivalent series of points, on occasions in identical language. (66)

Finally, for the University of Aberdeen the STEAC report represented a missed opportunity by failing to take advantage of the suggestion made for a merger of

Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology and Aberdeen College of Education with the University of Aberdeen. It stated: "The proposal for the union of the institutions was a response to a local opportunity and was not intended to be seen necessarily as a model for transbinary co-operation elsewhere". (67) In its view, option 6 "would carry unacceptable dangers for the quality of the Scottish and, indeed, the United Kingdom universities". Control by the Scottish Office would lead to an "inward-looking and parochial Scottish university system". (68) It concluded that "it is essential to retain the link with UK universities" (69) and therefore opposed option 6 as a "quite unnecessarily dangerous leap in the dark". (70)

Heriot-Watt University, for its part, had "serious reservations" about each of the three safeguards. (71) Glasgow University, eventually adopting the view of its Principal, favoured the immediate establishment of a planning body which, after full evaluation, might become also a funding council. Finally, the University of Edinburgh believed that "no sufficiently positive case for change has been made" and had serious doubts as to whether any of the conditions could be met or maintained. It insisted that the Scottish universities "had been treated as fairly and reasonably as those of any other part of the United Kingdom by the UGC". (72)

Predictably, the majority university position was supported by the UGC. It found it extremely difficult to see how a UGC sub-committee could advise the proposed funding council since it would be impossible to consider Scottish needs on their own without reference to universities on a UK basis. At a time when there was a greater need than ever for universities to hold together the STEAC report appears to be a "recipe for fragmentation". (73) The Royal Society of Edinburgh shared these concerns and wondered whether the conditions set by STEAC could be delivered and whether, indeed, "they constituted long-term assurances". These views were reinforced by a number of bodies such as the Scottish Professors of Physics and

also by the AUT (Scotland), which argued strongly in favour of a Scottish sub-committee of the UGC.

The universities' position might be summarised in these terms:

- (a) no case for change had been made out;
- (b) the STEAC recommendation would weaken Scotland's connection with an international community of scholarship;
- (c) Scottish universities might become isolated with fewer students coming from south of the border and might even lose one or two medical faculties;
- (d) it was impossible to guarantee the three conditions; and
- (e) STEAC had come forward with a radical recommendation when its own analysis indicated that radical change was not required.

Not all university interests showed the same hostility to a national planning and funding council. The University of Glasgow, the National Union of Students, and five of the university students' associations which made submissions all vigorously defended the idea of a national planning and funding body, provided that that body included further education as well. Finally, the Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities Conservative Association strongly criticised the UGC as "a body of predominantly English composition and experience, whose members normally display scant understanding of or sympathy with the distinctive features of the Scottish system". (74)

On the other hand, support for the predominant university view appeared in some interesting places. The Church of Scotland believed that the case for a national planning and funding body "had not been made ". (75) The NAS/UWT opposed the joint planning and funding body on the grounds that it would place too much control with SED, a view that was also shared by ADES. Significantly, the ADES

response, probably drafted by David Semple, who was one of Scotland's representatives on the UGC, claimed that in the 1981 rationalisation "misery was evenly spread" (76) and supported the continued association of the Scottish universities with the UGC.

However, it would be fair to say that, despite these expressions of support from the universities and university-related bodies, the overwhelming thrust of the responses was in support of the major recommendation that national machinery be introduced for the funding and planning of higher education in Scotland. One headline was to the effect that the universities were "isolated on funding changes". (77) The GTC considered the establishment of a joint planning and funding body as "logical and rational in the context of a small country like Scotland" and considered that "a planning body without funding powers is not a realistic proposition". (78) The EIS strongly supported "the proposed body", seeing it as "the only satisfactory model for the management of Scottish higher education whose co-ordination and planning is at present entirely dependent on groups of senior educators and civil servants and marked by secretiveness, competitiveness and inconsistency". (79) The Advisory Council on the Arts in Scotland supported "the transfer of responsibilities of the Scottish universities to the Secretary of State for Scotland". (80) The Open University (OU) welcomed the initiative and made it clear that, if such a body were established, the OU, as a major provider of higher education in Scotland, would wish to be included within it. The SDP Educational Policy Group, the Scottish Liberal Party, and the Scottish National Party, all lent their support.

The Committee of Principals of the colleges indicated that they were "gratified to note that STEAC recommends the incorporation of all tertiary education institutions, including universities, within a single framework for planning and funding for it is in that way that a coherent national system of tertiary education is to be created". It found it "slightly disappointing to note that the incorporation of the universities

within the central planning and funding machinery has been made conditional." (81) However, the Committee of Principals considered that these conditions, "which are apparently stipulated to protect the university interest, are unnecessary since, in our judgement, the central recommendation of the STEAC report does not endanger the position of the universities." (82) And all five colleges of education strongly supported that view. While COPADOCI was clearly divided on the matter, all of those who would have formed part of the proposed SIT strongly supported the establishment of national planning and funding machinery, (83) as did the CNAA's Committee for Scotland.

Some of the expressions of support for national planning and funding machinery took serious exception to the conditions that had been stipulated. For example, the Scottish National Party could see no difficulty with regard to the universities' continuing access to a UK peer review system, believing that "there can be no good reason why researchers based in Scotland should appear less competent to the research councils because planning and funding is controlled by the SED rather than the DES." (84) The response from Moray House argued in similar vein and invoked the example of the CNAA as a national framework for peer review that operated perfectly well in Scotland. (85) With regard to access to the research funds, the college insisted that "the research councils that are based in England are national councils and the universities of Scotland ought to compete for a share of these funds on the same basis as other institutions of higher education".

While, then, it is fair to say that the university community itself was resolutely opposed to the establishment of national planning and funding machinery, with some support from outside interests, it is nevertheless reasonable to conclude that there was a clear body of support for the STEAC recommendation and, in some areas, a certain disappointment that the universities' incorporation within the national planning and funding machinery had been made conditional.

Contraction of the College of Education System

In response to a parliamentary question from George Foulkes on the response to the STEAC recommendation on college closures, Allan Stewart answered that, "Although the majority of respondents opposed the recommendation, some have supported it." (86) That support for contraction came from some unexpected quarters. The Committee of Principals accepted "that a measure of rationalisation of the college of education system is necessary and that it would be possible on a numerical basis to accommodate the population of pre-service students, as presently projected, in a smaller number of colleges". (87) The Secondary Heads Association (Scottish Area) claimed that "It may well be inevitable that some colleges will close. That is preferable to allowing them to die slowly." (88) The NAS/UWT, believing that "there is no denying that over-capacity exists", recommended the continuation of St Andrew's, Jordanhill, Moray House and Dundee. The Catholic Education Commission, noting that St Andrew's College's position was secure, supported the reduction to three non-denominational colleges. And the Education Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland deviated only slightly from the STEAC recommendation by considering that it is "desirable to have four denominational colleges of education and not three to allow for the geographical spread and local resourcing". (89)

While support for the central recommendation was certainly to be found, that support was numerically small. The overwhelming majority of the respondents reacted critically and negatively. The full extent of the opposition to the closure recommendation can be gauged from the following table.

	Non- closure	Craigie	Dundee	Dunfermline	Aberdeen	Jordanhill	Against any closure	TOTAL
Institutional	95	24	8	3	10	1	28	169
Personal	11	63	24	7	11	5	6	127
Politicians	4	15	9	11	5	4	3	51
	110	102	41	21	26	10	37	347

NB: There were two "double entries" - ie a single submission in favour of two colleges. These have been listed amongst the responses that were favourable to the college of education system but not to any specific college - ie in column 7.

Column 1 gives the number of submissions which either made no reference to the college of education closure or supported that recommendation. The figures in the other columns give the number of submissions which opposed closure of one or more colleges. It can be seen that of the 347 representations made, 237 - more than two-thirds - expressed opposition to the recommendation that the college of education system should be reduced to four colleges and that opposition was expressed in a torrent of disapproval.

Five lines of attack can be identified. Firstly, body after body felt that, having commended the work of the colleges of education, having considered that the colleges "have served Scotland well and will continue to do so", (90) having maintained that "no evidence has been presented to us of dissatisfaction with the product of the present system", (91) STEAC was being self-contradictory in recommending the closure of three colleges. Why severely contract a system that is acknowledged to be providing an effective service? It appeared that the recommendation was motivated by financial rather than educational considerations.

The second counter-argument was that the charge of over-capacity was ill-founded. Critics noted in the report of the CAG and of the PAC (92) which was published on 19 December 1985, eleven days after the STEAC report itself, that under cross-examination James Scott of SED had admitted that the SED's calculation of the capacity of the colleges "was not very satisfactory". (93) Indeed, he

acknowledged that the Department was committed "to get a defensible system". (94) Given the Department's uncertainty, there could be no well grounded argument about over-capacity.

That argument was pursued by ALCES in a thirty-page critique of the report's recommendations. (95) It took the projected total population of 7,382 for 1995/96 but claimed that there had to be added to that figure the "25,000 teachers" on in-service courses. Of course, that reference to 25,000 teachers was misleading, for that in-service was normally located in schools or involved attendance at classes in the evenings or at week-ends and was therefore irrelevant to the over-capacity issue. Besides, ALCES had based its assumptions on the net rather than the gross capacity. The latter figure, according to the CAG report, was 11,000, and it was against that figure that the projected student population of 7,382 had to be set. (96) That clearly provided evidence of over-capacity. However, the weakness of the STEAC's position was that it did not demonstrate, as the PAC and the CAG had failed to demonstrate, what saving in capacity could be achieved by the loss of three colleges, especially when the colleges to be closed were not identified. ALCES was therefore justified in finding this part of the argument "insecure" and to be "potentially ruinously damaging". (97)

This issue was to plague Bone during the consultation period. As Vice-Chairman of STEAC he was inevitably drawn into discussion about the report and made numerous presentations to groups in different parts of the country. He was frequently questioned on the proposal to close three colleges and, while he made it clear that he supported this recommendation, he "did not see it as part of (his) job to go round the country arguing for this one". (98) Nor was he persuaded to respond when his critics took to the pages of the press for an answer. One of these, Ian McPherson, a national ALCES officer, had a particularly pointed question to pose. Referring to a seminar held by the National Union of Students on 20 January

1981, at which Bone had declined to comment on the college closure issue, McPherson wrote asking

"Firstly, how did STEAC come, as a matter of fact, to its recommendation that *three* more of Scotland's colleges of education should be closed? That is, three unidentified colleges of education out of the relevant six.

Secondly, if this recommendation can be rationally justified, how could STEAC have justified it, given these three points: the marked differences in size between the six surviving and relevant colleges, the perceived political need to insist on the separate continuation of the one (seventh) denominational college, and the geographical distribution of population throughout Scotland?" (99)

McPherson pressed Bone for an answer since "he is a leading party to this recommendation and since, apparently, he was not too reluctant to contribute to discussion prior to the last closing of other colleges of education", a reference to the fact that Bone strongly supported the case for closure of colleges at the GTC in 1980. There is no doubt this was a difficult challenge to meet for, as has been seen, STEAC had no basis whatever for reaching the conclusion that it did, apart from the general evidence of over-capacity and the belief that there should be three geographically distributed non-denominational colleges.

The third strand of the argument against the closure recommendation concerned cost. STEAC considered that "if . . . teacher training is to be provided on a cost-effective basis and higher education resources in general are to be used efficiently, a further reduction in the number of colleges of education appears to be essential". (100) ALCES maintained that, since the quality of achievement and

high standards of the existing seven colleges had been acknowledged, it was impossible for such a system to be deemed "inefficient". It is true that the CAG identified a catalogue of apparent anomalies in the funding of the college of education system, but James Scott had vigorously defended these anomalies before the PAC and, once again, ALCES was able to use the very words of the Secretary of the SED to refute the claims that the colleges of education were not cost-effective. For example, Scott was quoted as saying that "the real costs of educating a teacher in the Scottish colleges of education over the past five years have been in decline" (101) And later he acknowledged that "for the last ten years the colleges have been in continuous turmoil, with cut after cut being imposed" (102) But when the PAC drew attention to the differences, for example, with the voluntary sector in England, James Scott replied that "Teacher training, both north and south of the border, is recognised to be lecturer intensive and, in fact, to justify higher staff/student ratios than certain other disciplines." (103) ALCES pointed out that "the key explanation was that the work involves placement, tutorial work with students individually, and work with teachers in situ in their schools". ALCES concluded that "the very nature of the work undertaken indicates higher unit costs. The colleges cannot with any justification be condemned for costing what they do to execute the functions required of them."

The fourth counter-argument concerned the dispersal model of teacher education. That argument, resolutely defended by Scott at the PAC hearing, was that it was essential, if the colleges were to continue to pursue their key in-service function and to support development work in schools, that they were dispersed throughout the country. The words of Scott himself (104) were that there were "very strong arguments of sentiment and affinity which could be produced against any proposal to concentrate in the central belt". That argument was based on the assumption that pre-service and in-service work should be interdependent and that, since a

dispersed model was essential to enable teachers to access in-service and to allow teachers to be supported by college staff, pre-service should also be dispersed. Not all members of the college of education community supported this view. For example, St Andrew's College of Education, mindful of its need to protect its in-service position while being centred in Bearsden, and favouring the growth of a number of outstations to provide in-service for Roman Catholic teachers throughout the country, believed that "the STEAC model of centralising pre-service and decentralising in-service contains many valuable aspects". (105) The Principal of Moray House, in a personal submission, maintained that there was "an obvious necessity to reduce the number of centres offering courses of initial teacher education. The practice of seeking to distribute a diminishing number of students over seven colleges of education is economically and educationally suspect On the other hand, the need for continuing professional development, particularly amongst teachers, is widely acknowledged and, in my judgement, that provision ought to be one in which opportunities for professional development are widely dispersed." He concluded, "centres offering opportunities for continuing education can be effective, even if they do not provide initial training". (106)

However, despite these views, it is clear that the case for the seven-college system was based on the line of argument developed, for example, by the Association for Science Education that "institutes which deal only in pre-service or in-service work are unlikely to give the quality provision that is possible within an establishment offering both elements". (107) Since the case for in-service was widely, if not universally, acknowledged, and since that presupposed a dispersal model, it was felt that the system could be protected by repeatedly defending the value of the dispersal principle. Just as the introduction of a generous allowance of 213 FTE for in-service work had protected the college system in the mid-'70s, so the protection of in-service would ensure that the seven-college system would be maintained.

Finally, the case for maintaining all seven colleges was thought to be educationally appropriate at a time when improvements in education were sought. At a time of major curricular change, when the government's alleged mishandling of educational development was thought to have resulted in a ruinous and protracted teachers' dispute, there was an acknowledgement that curriculum development would not occur without teacher development and support. The argument was advanced that, even if there was over-capacity, the available space should be used to offer a much more generous provision of in-service opportunities for serving teachers. The GTC argued strongly for initiatives of this kind. It recognised that "by any standard of definition, there currently exist too many places earmarked for pre-service training" and considered that there was a need for a change of function: with a reduced emphasis in pre-service, the in-service places should be massively expanded. (108)

The Scottish Further Education Association submission, drafted by Graham Allison, former Vice-Principal at Hamilton College, argued strongly against the "cost-cutting arguments used in the report". It considered that "the goal of regular professional refreshment will recede even further if the committee's recommendation to reduce the number of colleges is accepted". (109)

A further path to enhanced quality of education was thought to lie in introducing much more generous staff:student ratios in the schools. Throughout the period of retrenchment from 1977, the colleges of education had responded to the annual consultation exercise on intake levels by claiming that these were based on out-moded staff:student ratios. Obviously, if these were made more generous, college intakes could be increased and thus the devastating effect of declining school rolls on college intakes, and therefore staffing levels, might be halted and possibly even reversed.

Recapitulation

In summary, then, the case for defending the existing seven-college system was five-fold: it was contradictory for STEAC on the one hand to claim that teacher education was highly successful then to recommend the closure of three colleges; secondly, the charge of over-capacity was ill-founded; thirdly, the argument for closure on the grounds of reducing costs failed to take account of the fact that teacher education was inherently staff intensive and therefore expensive; fourthly, teacher education, at both pre-service and in-service levels, required to be dispersed because effective in-service favoured dispersal and it was assumed that pre-service and in-service work should co-exist in the same institution; finally, the reduction of the college system was thought to be educationally inappropriate: such unused capacity as existed could be devoted to training more teachers by introducing more generous staff:student ratios and by creating more opportunities for in-service work and other forms of professional development, so urgently needed at a time of major curriculum change.

The Campaign against College Closures

While, then, there was significant support for the retention of a seven-college system, some 200 responses were pleas in defence of particular colleges. Even such bodies as the EIS, that might have been expected to take a neutral stance, argued in line with the dispersal principle for the retention of both Aberdeen and Dundee, as well as for Craigie, "the only institution of further education in the south-west of the country". (110) The University of Strathclyde accepted the monotechnic principle, even while it also believed that "there needs to be rationalisation within the present scale of provision". It contended that it would be "gravely disturbed if there were to be any threat to Craigie College". (111) St Andrews University stated: "Regardless of what may be decided about the provision of the pre-service training of teachers, we see a continuing need for

in-service to be available and the growing importance of Dundee College as a resource centre." (112)

However, most of these submissions came from the colleges themselves. The NUS response predicted that the effect of recommending the closure of three colleges, without naming them, would lead to a bitter rivalry, "inviting colleges to enter an exercise of self-justification and survival of the fittest in order to stave off the axe". (113) And so it proved. Of course, the colleges were in a difficult position: they were under pressure to defend the system as a whole but were forced into a bidding exercise in which they had to justify their own continued existence. Thus, for example, Moray House, having argued strongly for the monotechnic principle and for the retention of all colleges, mainly on grounds of the dispersal principle, thought it prudent to have a concluding paragraph in which it set out what it saw to be the justification for the future of Moray House. It stated, "The foregoing commentary has attempted to be rational, objective, and non-partisan. Lest the Moray House case be allowed to go by default, the following observations are made on its behalf." (114) There followed a list of the features of Moray House which were thought to commend it: its location in a capital city; its commitment to external validation; its partnership arrangements with schools; its standing as an established centre for research and development; its status as the second largest institution for overseas education in the UK; its programmes in community education and social work; and its record over the past ten years as having the lowest unit cost of the Scottish colleges. It hoped that these qualities justified it "a secure place in the future of professional education in Scotland". Aberdeen College of Education welcomed STEAC's explicit rejection of "mergers between a local university and its neighbouring central institution and college". While accepting the JCCES statement on the need for rationalisation, it argued that "it is essential for the well-being of the teaching profession in the north and east of Scotland that there is retained in Aberdeen a college of education large enough to

sustain the full range of teacher education courses at both pre-service and in-service levels". It was essential, the college argued, to oppose the tendency "to concentrate teacher education activities in the central belt". (115) The Dundee submission acknowledged "the difficulty of submitting comments which were favourable to Dundee without appearing to reflect less favourably on other colleges of education". It nevertheless went on to draw attention to "the high unemployment figure for Dundee and the fact that tertiary education, in which the college played so important a part, is vital to the city and the region". (116)

The most elaborate and sustained submissions came from those institutions thought to be at risk. These had been identified almost as soon as the report appeared. Indeed, even when the STEAC was formed in July 1983 the Education Correspondent of *The Glasgow Herald* declared that "education colleges may be new Council's first target", (117) and suggested that the outcome might well be the closure of the colleges or their "incorporation into university education departments", a move that was "consistent with the up-grading of the primary teaching diploma to degree status". The day after the publication of the STEAC report, the same writer, with the same authoritative insight, claimed that "an almost certain candidate for closure will be Dunfermline College of Physical Education"; that "Mr Younger may have to face the unpleasant prospect of nominating his own local college (Craigie) for closure"; and that "the remaining closure will almost certainly result in a merger of Aberdeen and Dundee Colleges of Education, with Dundee, where there is considerable surplus accommodation, looking the likely base for what would become a new north-east of Scotland college of education". (118)

The Scotsman ventured that Dundee, Craigie and Dunfermline Colleges were "most at risk". (119) *The Daily Record* mentioned Craigie as "the first college on the axing list", with Dunfermline College of Physical Education as the second, and the

third "a toss up between Aberdeen and Dundee". (120) *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland* hedged its bets: "on cost grounds the most expensive were Dundee, Dunfermline and Aberdeen; while the smallest were Craigie, Dunfermline and Dundee". (121) Two of these four colleges - Craigie and Dunfermline - had featured on the closure list on two previous occasions. In 1977, when a Labour government turned its attention to the college of education sector, these two colleges, along with Craiglockhart Roman Catholic College in Edinburgh, were scheduled to close but were reprieved only by a change of mind by the government in the face of massive political, public and professional opposition. In 1980, on this occasion under a Conservative government, again Craigie and Dunfermline were expected to be closed in an attempt to reduce the college system. Both survived when, instead, the decision was taken to close Hamilton and Callendar Park, and to merge the two Roman Catholic colleges, Notre Dame and Craiglockhart to create St Andrew's College of Education. Craigie and Dunfermline, therefore, both had experience of mobilising political and public support and, once again, following the publication of STEAC, their experience was invoked in response to what had now, for them, become a familiar threat. For their part, Aberdeen and Dundee, which on previous occasions may even have felt themselves to be secure by virtue of their location in a major city, now had to address the possibility that one or other of them might close. The four colleges, therefore, mounted their separate campaigns to secure their survival.

The Craigie response to the STEAC report, which became the manifesto for its campaign, was an 18-page affirmation of the educational and community significance of the institution. Its case rested on six key features: its geographical position, thought necessary, as the PAC had argued, to support in-service training; the high employment record of college graduates; its unit costs which, in the STEAC report, were the lowest of all the Scottish colleges; its successful use of excess accommodation; its service to the community; and the strength of its

partnership with Strathclyde University and the Open University. Exception could be taken to some of these claims: for example the unit cost figure was atypical and first destination statistics are not an ideal measure of course quality. However, such complications are of little consequence when the intention is to generate maximum publicity and support, and they provided the basis for a range of questions submitted by George Foulkes to the Secretary of State. (122) One of the issues emphasised by Foulkes and others was the concept of out-stations, that being perceived by the Department as a way of compensating for the closure of a college while maintaining in-service provision. Craigie's supporters insisted that "only a full-blooded college" would do. (123)

A striking feature of the Craigie campaign was the strength of the support that was expressed by the community in which it was set. Peter McNaught, the Craigie principal, affirmed the value of that support:

"I found that the south-west was quite genuinely proud of Craigie. It was seen as a marker of some importance. It had the community behind it and, from the very first attack in 1977, I saw that the best thing we could do was to extend our community range so that we genuinely kept the promises we had made to people. All our publicity was based on this claim: 'This is not our college, it's yours. It really is here to sustain educational development in the south west.' . . . The college put down very important roots and we found that what we had given to the community they were ready to give back to us. All we had to do was to put the pieces together and I think it is fair to say that, immediately a threat appeared, all the agencies in the local community - and I am talking about the churches, I am talking about local councils and politicians, members

of parliament, and a host of other people - were immediately on our side. And one very crucial thing, the schools were also." (124)

The extent of community support was impressive: the Ayr Division of Strathclyde Region, fifteen advisers, the local EIS branch, the local Association of Headteachers, five schools and their staffs, the church, the Chamber of Commerce, three presbyteries, one of them by "unanimous deliverance", the Open University Students' Association, the Ayr and Craigie Film Club, and numerous others. Significantly, support was sought through politicians. The seven MPs covering the south-west of Scotland all made representations, and often repeated representations, to the Secretary of State. George Foulkes cheekily reminded Malcolm Rifkind of how they had manned the barricades together in 1977/78 in protest against a Labour government's closure plans: "You, sir, were noted for your most eloquent and impassioned support for the campaign to save the colleges." (125) George Younger, Rifkind's former boss and cabinet colleague, wrote: "I should be most grateful if, after the consultation period is over and before you and Allan Stewart make final decisions affecting the colleges of education, I might have a word with you to express my concern about the future of Craigie College." (126)

Dunfermline College of Physical Education's campaign was different from Craigie's but was no less impressive. It may have attracted only a fraction of the responses that occurred in the Craigie campaign but what it lacked in numerical support it made up for in the volume of documentation it generated, and that documentation was carefully targeted at ministers, chiefly the constituency MP, Lord James Douglas-Hamilton. Despite the fact that the STEAC report did not appear until 9 December 1985, by 8 January 1986 Dunfermline College of Physical Education had distributed to every Scottish MP a well presented booklet setting out the college's case. Dismissing the "mischievous and misleading statements which appeared in some press reports" it set out "the continuing role of the college in the

future of Scottish tertiary education". It turned on its head STEAC's own argument about the integration of teacher training in larger establishments, maintaining that when physical education is incorporated into a larger institution it is subject to "peripheralisation". It defended its high unit costs by reference to the fact that specialist training within institutions inevitably led to higher unit costs and concluded with a strong statement about Dunfermline College as "a national asset". It justified its range of work covering teaching, research, the community activities programme, its facilities and resources, and concluded that "the major public investment necessary to create these facilities has created for the college a unique capability to sustain its specialist educational function".

The submission itself was a massive document. It contained a statement from the Board of Governors setting out the achievements of the institution, and included a 70-page treatise from the Board of Studies, which included an analysis of unit costs undertaken by independent financial experts. These were shown to have risen progressively through the '80s but were capable of reducing "by the single act of integrating the training of all physical education teachers at Dunfermline College of Physical Education". It was thought that the incorporation of Jordanhill physical education would "provide for the long-term economic and educational viability of the college". (127)

Several appendices were included. For example, one documented all of the consultancy and research and development activities undertaken by staff to convey the impression of a vigorous institution of higher education. A second was a copy of a report of a visit by the GTC to Dunfermline College on 19 May 1983, which was full of highly commendatory statements about the institution, including its efforts to establish partnership with the schools, the commitment to monitoring and evaluation, and the high quality of the students, "easily the most mature and highly motivated group of students" encountered by one member of the visiting party. A

further appendix described DCPE as a national centre of excellence in sport, dance, fitness and recreation; it demonstrated how that model was in line with international centres of sport and related studies. Finally, the college emphasised its strength as a centre of in-service education and its capacity for diversification. All in all, the college constituted "a national asset of major importance". All of that documentation was widely distributed and provided the basis for several expressions of support. One of these was an article in *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland*, which set out "The Case for Dumf". (128) Besides, the Principal of the college ensured that all of the documentation was sent to the local MP and one of the covering letters expressed the hope that the college's name might be changed to "The Scottish College of Physical Education". (129)

In his campaign, Lord James invoked the support of fellow MPs. He persuaded "an independent MP" (Barry Henderson, MP for North-East Fife), to visit the college and to write on its behalf. That letter referred to "the high quality of (Dunfermline's) specialist teacher training role", and suggested that the males from "Jordon Hill" (sic) should transfer to Cramond. He also secured the support of the Labour MP, John Maxton, who had made an astonishing interjection in the parliamentary debate on 1 July 1985 on the bill which was intended to prohibit separation of the sexes for physical education training. He claimed that "in some ways it makes sense to take the Scottish School of Physical Education at Jordanhill and merge it with Dunfermline College. That makes more sense than closing down completely the facilities at Dunfermline College." (130) Finally, Lord James sought to impress on the Secretary of State the need to avoid any link with Moray House and proposed instead an association with Heriot-Watt University, following the "excellent precedent" of Edinburgh College of Art. (131) That was reinforced by a powerful letter from the Principal, Jean Carroll, who reckoned that the proposed link with Moray House would mean that everything "would inevitably sink to the prevailing mediocrity". (132)

The campaigns mounted by Aberdeen and Dundee Colleges were less wide-ranging than those conducted on behalf of Craigie and Dunfermline. There was again the same determination to enlist the support of local members of parliament and of headteachers and education authorities. For example, Grampian Regional Council believed that "lines of communication would be lengthened if there were no college there, with resultant reduction in service". In addition, "recruitment of young teachers within Grampian Region itself would be difficult". Finally, "there is a need for an educational base to serve primary, secondary, and independent school communities". Members of the Grampian Region Secondary Headteachers' Association claimed that

"Aberdeen College occupies a unique geographical position to serve the needs of the teaching profession and education authorities. It is important that this area of Scotland be served in its principal city by the full range of educational facilities, including teacher training." (133)

Similar expressions of support were provided by education authorities in Tayside. Another significant similarity was the way in which, for both institutions, there was support from agencies outwith education. The various social welfare organisations drew attention to the importance of the two colleges as providers of community education and social work courses. This view was, for example, expressed by the Aberdeen Association of Social Service on behalf of Aberdeen College, and by the Salvation Army on behalf of Dundee College.

The Dundee campaign differed in two significant ways from that on behalf of Aberdeen. In the first place, fifteen of the submissions were made by past or present students on the Dundee Distance Learning Diploma in Educational

Technology. Submissions were received from as far apart as Inverness and Sri Lanka, drawing attention to the crucial importance of the course and maintaining that the loss of such a course would be educationally damaging.

Finally, a striking initiative adopted by Dundee, and introduced even before STEAC had completed its deliberations, was the suggestion that it should feature as a European Community College of Education, supporting through its distance-learning expertise a number of European initiatives. In a letter dated 20 June 1985, Gordon Wilson, the local MP, had written to the Secretary of State enclosing a report from the Dundee branch of ALCES entitled "European College for Dundee Campus". This was seen by the union as a "dramatic initiative" and as a way of responding to the criticism that the college was too big and its facilities were under-utilised. The creation of the college as the first European Community College of Education would ensure that "the public gets value for its investment". Perhaps the mood at Dundee was summarised in a statement from a member of staff: "a sense of deprivation would be bound to arise in the region at the closure of a prosperous, viable, fully-utilised and well integrated college". Such a closure would "inevitably give rise to considerable public indignation and outcry". (134)

Both colleges claimed that they provided strong courses, that they were an important source of in-service support for teachers in schools, and that the provision they made in non-teacher education areas made them an important centre of higher education in their respective areas. On the other hand, one submission from the Aberdeen branch of ALCES injected a particular note of bitterness when it stated that, while it supported the system as a whole, it could not "support a recommendation that seeks to create a few colleges which are considerably larger than they need to be to fulfil their educational, social and cultural functions merely to achieve marginal reductions in the unit cost of operation when the price of such

policies is to deny to other parts common facilities on which local teachers, local authorities and local citizens depend". (135)

Finally, Jordanhill College was driven into the bidding process. Its own response to the STEAC report was a balanced analysis, strongly supporting the integration of colleges of education in their local universities, following the example set by its principal on the Council. The college was aware of the developing conflict with Dunfermline College of Education; it was also aware of the damaging reference in Appendix 5 of the CAG Report to the effect that the Department "have for some time been considering a proposal to centralise all physical education training" at Dunfermline. (136) In reply, Jordanhill sought to be even-handed and proposed that "the training of physical education specialists should be carried out in the east and west with equal numbers of students being allocated in these two parts of the country". However, it went on to argue that, for reasons of educational efficiency and resource costs, the training of physical education specialists should be carried out in conjunction with the training of other teachers, strongly arguing the case for centralising at Jordanhill.

"If it is decided that training should be carried out in only one centre, we would remind you that Jordanhill has excellent and extensive facilities which would permit the training of all the physical education teachers needed by Scotland on one campus and in a multi-disciplinary environment with all the support facilities of a major institution available to students while, at the same time, providing economies of scale. (137)

The case for embedding physical education training along with other teachers was justified on the grounds that "to do otherwise is to imply that the physical education

specialist is in some way completely different from any other teacher in the secondary school".

Strathclyde Regional Council provided lukewarm support for the Jordanhill position by maintaining that "it is our firm belief that the disciplinary environment of Jordanhill is a viable element of the training of PE specialists". The briefest submission was made by Doreen Cosgrove, the wife of a member of staff at SSPE. Her letter included an extract from *The Glasgow Herald* of 10 July in which Archie McPherson, the well known commentator and graduate of the SSPE, provided a vigorous defence of Jordanhill College, maintaining "no amount of sympathy for Dunfermline will convince me that the solution of up-rooting the Scottish School is an appropriate one. Indeed, the reverse is true. I think it is patently absurd." The covering letter simply stated "Dear Sir, Please read and heed."

Jordanhill entered the political conflict rather late in the day by writing to George Robertson, MP, partly in response to an article in *The Glasgow Herald* of 26 June 1986 speculating that physical education students from SSPE might be transferred to Dunfermline in an attempt to make Dunfermline College a more viable unit. That letter included a submission from Bernard Wright, Director of SSPE, making it clear that the Scottish School "has not vigorously lobbied for political patronage or made exaggerated claims to gain publicity. It has, however, earned an international reputation for the quality of its professional training." He went on to claim that Jordanhill had the best specialist facilities for training; that, as a constituent part of Jordanhill, the Scottish School enjoyed "an essential multidisciplinary environment"; and that Jordanhill was more cost-effective and was situated in a densely populated area which made it attractive for students and schools. The letter, however, ended by suggesting "a sensible alternative": that two national schools be established, one in the east and one in the west. That

memo was sent to all Scottish MPs in late June 1986, a response that has to be contrasted sharply with the initiative taken by Dunfermline College almost before the ink on the STEAC report was dry. However, the Jordanhill compromise was supported by the Association of Directors of Leisure and Recreation, whose submission indicated that there was "excellent training" provided by both institutions and considered that it would be a mistake to see either of the two colleges lost to Scotland. (138)

The various campaigns that have been outlined had some features in common. They sprang from a realisation that the institutions concerned might be at risk if three colleges had to close. They all involved the adducing of evidence to show that the institutions concerned had a vital contribution to make to pre-service and to in-service training, and that they enjoyed the support of their local communities. Of course, not all of these cases could be successful. The very act of self-defence was an indirect threat to the other colleges. However, the colleges strove to avoid making explicit attacks on a competitor. That, of course, could not be avoided in the area of physical education, which, as the report had recommended, could no longer be provided separately for males and females. The revelation contained in the CAG report, which hinted that the government had for some time been considering the possibility of transferring male physical education to Dunfermline College of Physical Education, was a devastating blow, for there was a widely held view in the system that the move would be in the opposite direction, if only because it appeared that significant sums could be obtained from the disposal of the Dunfermline College site. However, when it became manifest that Dunfermline College had been explicitly attacking the quality of work at Jordanhill, it became essential for Jordanhill to respond in like manner, albeit belatedly. Finally, a significant feature of each of the campaigns was the attempt to exert maximum impact on politicians, for it became realised that, at the end of the day, the decision

to be made on the future of the college system would be political rather than educational.

Political Representations

Scottish MPs had an early opportunity to register their reactions to the STEAC report at the Matter Day Debate on higher education held at the Scottish Grand Committee in Edinburgh on 20 January 1986. (139) As might be expected, and as evidence of the rapid politicisation of the STEAC's recommendations, all of the speakers, except the government spokesmen, Malcolm Rifkind and Allan Stewart, acknowledged the representations they had received from interested parties. Not surprisingly, ministers adopted a neutral stance. Malcolm Rifkind welcomed the report as "a unique analysis". He recognised the recommendations on the transfer of funding as "controversial" and he saw the proposal to close three colleges as "particularly far-reaching, at least in its implications for staff, for college-school links, and for in-service training". (140) Nevertheless, he remained open-minded about the report. He gave an assurance, repeated by his junior minister, that, as far as the transfer of funding was concerned, he regarded the universities as "a national asset" and believed that "the national and international standing of our universities should not be put at risk". (141) The only lapse from complete neutrality was Allan Stewart's affirmation, in his winding-up speech, that, successful as the colleges of education surely were, "it is in no-one's interest that scarce resources should be tied up in the maintenance of over-capacity". (142) Other speakers could afford to show other shades of partisanship. While the Labour speakers, with the exception of Tam Dalziel, supported the repatriation of the universities, they did not support this recommendation with uniform enthusiasm. Donald Dewar felt "there was a case" for transfer of funding to the SED; that, "division and fragmentation lead to confusion and, ultimately, to the less efficient use of resources"; and that there was hardly "any logic in a situation in which the schools, central institutions and colleges of education become the responsibility of an assembly after the next

election, whilst the universities are fenced off, remote and distant, surviving under the Department of Education and Science". (143) Norman Godman found the proposal "most welcome" (144) and Harry Ewing briefly maintained that the repatriation proposal was in line with his party's commitment to wider devolution.

The opponents of repatriation were much more vigorous in their advocacy. Tam Dalziel, referring to the concerns that had been expressed to him by "the science and medical faculties of our great Scottish universities", (145) considered it to be an error to bring the universities under "the same umbrella as other bodies whose main function is to serve what are essentially local and applied needs". He held that it would weaken Scotland's "disproportionately large share of the UK provision"; and he believed that Scotland could not support anything like the rigorous peer review system sponsored by the UGC. Barry Henderson was equally dismissive, holding that "the Council over-reached itself with all this overarching stuff". (146) He strongly favoured the establishment of a Scottish NAB, which would be able to engage with other university interests much more effectively "than the monolithic and socialistic structure proposed by the STEAC report". (147) Finally, in the most ringing condemnation of all, Michael Forsyth saw STEAC as "a threat to the Scottish universities", (148) bringing "a most undesirable parochialism into the control of Scottish universities". (149) He saw the establishment of an overarching body simply as a way of responding to the demands of central institutions and colleges of education for a bigger share of the resource cake. It was clear to him that the "direct result of the establishment of the overarching body would be to reduce the money for research in Scottish universities". (150) As if it were not bad enough that universities would have to compete with other sectors of higher education for funds, they would lose the benefits they always enjoyed under the UGC's preferential treatment of Scotland.

The treatment of the colleges of education was altogether more desultory, apart from the statement by Donald Dewar, the Shadow Secretary of State. Malcolm Bruce decided, in a brief and inaccurate paragraph of a long and inconsequential statement, "to touch on the college issue". He claimed that STEAC's recommendations on the closure of "further education colleges" were "made in an almost throw-away sense"; he criticised STEAC for first commending the quality of the colleges, but then recommending that "more than half of them would have to close, without really justifying the argument". (151) He acknowledged "that there may be room for rationalisation" but defended the principle "of having training accessible to particular areas".

For the Conservatives, Gerry Malone reflected the concern felt by Aberdeen College of Education. He defended the continued existence of the college by referring to Grampian Region which, "is an area of growth with an increasing population of young married couples with children and so it does not have a declining demand for education". (152) He further defended the college by claiming that it "provides exceptional value for money per student", but adduced no evidence to substantiate that claim. Anna McCurley, in a rambling contribution, spoke ill of the colleges, singling Jordanhill out for special mention: "There was an air of gloom about the place." (153) While considering that the ALCES case was "not unconvincing", she questioned whether its figures were accurate and regretted that STEAC had "fudged the issue by not naming colleges for closure". (154) Michael Forsyth did refer to teacher education but only to object to the proposal that teacher training at Stirling, in his constituency, should be reviewed. That, for Forsyth, was a way of saying it would be closed.

For Labour, Harry Ewing, whose local college, Callendar Park, had been closed in 1981, contented himself with a few general observations about the need for the colleges and the growing need for in-service. Norman Godman, relying heavily on

the Dunfermline College submission, accused the STEAC of "inadequate homework". (155) He argued for a more detailed study of the capacity of the colleges and considered that it was "a bit of a nonsense" that a recommendation should be made for three colleges to close when "the capacity of the individual colleges varies from over 2,500 to less than 500". (156) Donald Dewar attempted to deal sympathetically with the closure recommendation. He argued for a deferral of a decision pending the establishment of the overarching body (contrary to the STEAC recommendation, but in line with the ALCES position), and until more systematic evidence was available on college capacity. Despite that, he maintained that "there is certainly evidence of over-capacity" (157) and accepted "that there will have to be rationalisation". (158)

Parliament returned to the question of the colleges on 26 March 1986 when Allan Stewart was pressed at Scottish Questions by Scottish MPs on the consultation process. The most significant feature of the debate was the interjection by Dennis Canavan, who claimed that the government had previously "betrayed" three colleges of education, despite the fact that in 1979 in a Scottish Grand Committee debate, "many conservative members, including the Right Honourable Member for Edinburgh Pentlands (Rifkind), argued strongly against closures". (159)

George Foulkes made only a single interjection in the Grand Committee Debate on 20 January and that was to request and to receive an explicit guarantee from Malcolm Rifkind that "no decision will be taken (on colleges of education) until the consultation period has been concluded". (160) However, on 27 March he was successful in obtaining an Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons, specifically on STEAC's recommendations on the colleges of education. While he took advantage of that opportunity repeatedly to argue against any college closure, he devoted his speech to a rigorous defence of Craigie College and to an elaboration

of the six planks of the Craigie platform. His defence of Craigie contained two additional features. First, he maintained that, if there had to be "a temporary down-turn" in teacher numbers over the next year or so, then that could be accommodated by a down-turn in intake "especially in the larger colleges". (161) Secondly, he referred to the serious difficulties that occurred during the last round of college closures: Hamilton College was sold "at a knock-down price . . . to a somewhat dubious character", and Callendar Park College remained unsold. The answer, according to George Foulkes, was to keep all colleges open. In the same debate, Donald Dewar repeated his reservations over STEAC. The passages in the report dealing with college closures were "sparingly phrased and skeletal in their arguments". (162) As in the Matter Day Debate, he called for further and more detailed information before any decision was taken. What must have been particularly gratifying to members of parliament was Allan Stewart's assurance that "the government will, of course, take fully into account geographical and other factors, and the importance of in-service training". (163)

Perhaps the most significant feature of the debate is that it took place at all. It surely indicated that the government was coming under increasing pressure as representations flooded in on behalf of the college system as a whole and of individual colleges. While there were only two opportunities for members of parliament to debate the issue, outside these formal parliamentary occasions there had been substantial lobbying by members of parliament. In all, 51 submissions were made by MPs to ministers, most of these expressing concern that had been generated by defenders of one or more of the colleges. Clearly, what had been intended as a period of consultation on the future shape of higher education in Scotland had become a fierce and openly contested battle to resist the closure of teacher education colleges and, in this battle, members of parliament played a significant part.

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57. *The Scotsman*, 9 December 1985, page 8
58. *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland*, 13 December 1985, page 6
59. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 13 December 1985, page 1
60. BBC TV programme, "Left, Right and Centre", 17 January 1986
61. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 28 February 1986, page 5
62. Response of The Standing Committee of the Scottish Universities to STEAC Report
63. Response of Stirling University to STEAC Report
64. Response of The University of St Andrews to STEAC Report
65. Ibid
66. Response of The University of Dundee to STEAC Report
67. Response of Aberdeen University to STEAC Report
68. Ibid
69. Ibid
70. Ibid
71. Response of Heriot-Watt University to STEAC Report
72. Response of The University of Edinburgh to STEAC Report
73. Response of The University Grants Committee to STEAC Report
74. Response of The Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities Conservative Association to STEAC Report
75. Response of The Church of Scotland to STEAC Report
76. *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland*, 13 December 1985, page 6

77. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 30 May 1986, page 11. The actual wording of the headline referred to funding *charges*, an interesting misprint.
78. Response of The General Teaching Council for Scotland to STEAC Report
79. Response of The Educational Institute of Scotland to STEAC Report
80. Response of The Advisory Council on the Arts in Scotland to STEAC Report
81. Response of The Committee of Principals of the Colleges to STEAC Report
82. Ibid
83. Response of COPADOCI to STEAC Report
84. Response of The Scottish National Party to STEAC Report
85. Response of Moray House College of Education to STEAC Report
86. *Hansard*, 27 March 1986, *Written Answers*, column 590
87. Response of The Committee of Principals of Colleges of Education to STEAC Report
88. Response of The Secondary Heads Association (Scottish Area) to STEAC Report
89. Response of The Education Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to STEAC Report
90. Scottish Education Department, *Future Strategy for Higher Education in Scotland*, (STEAC Report), HMSO, Edinburgh, 1985, paragraph 5.28
91. Ibid
92. Committee of Public Accounts, *Fourth Report*, HMSO, London, December 1985
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94. Ibid
95. Response of ALCES to STEAC Report
96. National Audit office, *Scottish Education Department: The Control of Further Education Establishments*, Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, HMSO, London, 5 June 1985, Appendix 3
97. Response of ALCES to STEAC Report
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101. Committee of Public Accounts, *Fourth Report*, HMSO, London, December 1985, paragraph 2782
102. Ibid, paragraph 2825
103. Ibid, paragraph 2763
104. Ibid, paragraph 2864
105. Response of St Andrew's College of Education to STEAC Report
106. Personal submission from the Principal of Moray House College of Education to STEAC Report
107. Response of The Association for Science Education to STEAC Report
108. Response of The General Teaching Council for Scotland to STEAC Report
109. Response of The Scottish Further Education Association to STEAC Report
110. Response of The Educational Institute of Scotland to STEAC Report
111. Response of The University of Strathclyde to STEAC Report
112. Response of St Andrews University to STEAC Report
113. Response of the NUS to STEAC Report
114. Response of Moray House College of Education to STEAC Report
115. Response of Aberdeen College of Education to STEAC Report
116. Response of Dundee College of Education to STEAC Report
117. *The Glasgow Herald*, 20 July 1983, page 8
118. *The Glasgow Herald*, 10 December 1985, page 1
119. *The Scotsman*, 10 December 1985, page 1
120. *The Daily Record*, 10 December 1985, page 2
121. *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland*, 13 December 1985, page 1
122. Letter from George Foulkes to Malcolm Rifkind dated 4 March 1986. For example:

"Will economic savings be a major factor on decisions on closure?"
 "Will the ability to recruit students and the employment up-take of qualified teachers be considered in decisions on the future of the colleges?"
123. Letter dated 15 May 1986 from Mr R T Nisbet to Mr George Younger
124. In an interview with the author on 15 November 1994: the typescript is in the author's possession

125. Letter from George Foulkes to Malcolm Rifkind, 2 March 1986
126. Letter from George Younger to Malcolm Rifkind dated 8 March 1986
127. Response of Dunfermline College of Physical Education to STEAC Report
128. Malcolm Rooney, "The case for Dunf" in *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland*, 10 January 1986, page 96
129. Letter from Jean Carroll to Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, dated 13 February 1986
130. *Hansard*, column 145, 1 July 1985
131. Letter from Lord James Douglas-Hamilton to Malcolm Rifkind, 1 July 1986
133. Letter from Jean Carroll to Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, dated 13 February 1986
133. Response of Grampian Region Secondary Headteachers' Association to STEAC Report
134. Submission from a member of Dundee College, 7 March 1986
135. Response of Aberdeen Branch of ALCES to STEAC Report
136. National Audit Office, *Scottish Education Department: The Control of Further Education Establishments*, Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, HMSO, London, 5 June 1985, Appendix 5, paragraph 11
137. Response of Jordanhill College of Education to STEAC Report
138. Response of The Association of Directors of Leisure and Recreation to STEAC Report
139. *Hansard*, Scottish Grand Committee, 22 January 1986
140. *Ibid*, page 7
141. *Ibid*, page 10
142. *Ibid*, page 39
143. *Ibid*, page 15
144. *Ibid*, page 20
145. *Ibid*, page 34
146. *Ibid*, page 22
147. *Ibid*, page 23
148. *Ibid*, page 28
149. *Ibid*, page 30

150. Ibid
151. Ibid, page 28
152. Ibid, page 34
153. Ibid, page 18
154. Ibid
155. Ibid, page 20
156. Response of Dunfermline College of Physical Education to STEAC Report
157. *Hansard*, Scottish Grand Committee, 22 January 1986, page 13
158. Ibid, page 14
159. *Hansard*, 26 March 1986, *Oral Answers*, Column 933
160. *Hansard*, Scottish Grand Committee, 20 January 1986, page 2
161. *Hansard*, 27 March 1986, Column 1146
162. Ibid, page 1147
163. Ibid, page 1150

Introduction

The purpose of consultation is to inform decision-making. In political contexts a period of consultation is a prelude to parliamentary action by ministers. However, ministers do not operate in a vacuum. They are subject to the disciplines imposed by the managers of government business; they are the recipients of advice from political and professional sources; and their decision-making is supported by teams of civil servants. In the Scottish Office, decision-making on education enjoys the additional support of a team of independent professional advisers, Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, who are privileged to have direct access to the Secretary of State. For all that, like the others mentioned, they constitute an established feature of the apparatus of government.

In tracing the development of policy in an attempt to identify its principal determinants, it is important to differentiate the term "government" and, if at all possible, to isolate the impact on policy-making of advisers from that of ministers themselves. As a prelude to the analysis of ministerial action on STEAC, and relying mainly on SED files, this chapter seeks to assess the impact on policy development of the two "sides" of the SED - "administrative" and "professional" colleagues, as they courteously refer to each other. On the basis of that study, and the findings of chapter 5, an assessment is then offered of the major pressures confronting the Secretary of State in disposing of the STEAC report. Having examined the ministerial decisions and their justification, the chapter considers the public and professional reaction to the ministerial statement before charting, and assessing STEAC's significance in, the eventual restructuring of higher education in Scotland.

The Impact of "Administrative and Professional Colleagues"

Both McPherson and Raab and Humes refer to tensions between these two sides of the SED house and their account is supported by other sources. (1) The evidence of the files suggests that, while there were occasions on which irritability surfaced between colleagues - for example, exception was taken to the charge that an HMI was trying "to lead the committee by the nose" - on the whole civil servants and inspectors worked in unison, consistently supporting the lines of advice being offered. How independent was that advice? And to what extent were the government's advisers pursuing a Departmental line?

Throughout its deliberations STEAC was strongly supported by SED officers and the Chairman himself, on a visit to the Department, paid "a grateful tribute to the quality of the Department's servicing of the committee". (2) Departmental support for the STEAC initiative continued after the publication of the report. A great deal of time was devoted to drafting letters for ministers in response to the growing expressions of concern, particularly with regard to the college of education system, between the end of the consultation period and the ministerial decision. For example, notwithstanding the recommendation of the STEAC report, the Secretary of State clearly entertained the possibility and desirability of integrating the colleges of education with the universities. A briefing paper for the press conference launching the report on 9 December 1985, adopting the familiar question-and-answer format, included the following:

"Question 21: Will immediate steps be taken to end over-capacity in the colleges of education?

Answer: There will be no undue delay, but immediate action on one area of the STEAC report would pre-empt proper consideration of the report as a whole. The Secretary of State will wish, in the first instance, to

satisfy himself that the structure of higher education proposed by STEAC is the right one."

An earlier version of the briefing paper contained the following additional sentence: "For instance, the Secretary of State remains to be persuaded that the colleges should remain separate and not be linked with universities." However, the same reticence was not displayed in a subsequent internal memorandum to a Treasury official seeking an early indication of the Department's response to the PAC report published on 19 December. The closure of Dundee had obviously been mooted as an earnest of the Department's commitment to radical surgery, but a senior official advised against "trailing" that possibility and went on: "It is abundantly clear that the Secretary of State still hopes that the outcome of our consultation on the STEAC report will be to show that STEAC was wrong in rejecting the case for making teacher training a responsibility of the Scottish universities and thereby, in effect, merging the whole college of education system with the universities. If, however, the Secretary of State's eventual decision were, in fact, to go down the university road, it would not make any sense to have closed Dundee College of Education as an interim measure, with the inevitable political trauma involved in so doing." (3) The Treasury may have been clamouring for action, but the commitment to protecting all the minister's options is clear.

A similar commitment is evident in some of the exchanges on "out-stations". Question 25 of the briefing paper asked whether the concept of "out-stations" for in-service work was "a practical proposition". The recommended answer, again revealing the Department's determination to protect what became known internally as "the closure option", stated: "The concept is clearly worth considering. Existing out-stations attached to Jordanhill and St Andrew's colleges maintain a very useful presence in areas where there is no college of education." In similar vein, the Secretary of State's drafters responded to a concern expressed by George Younger

on behalf of Craigie that the college might be reduced to something less than "a full-blooded college". The Secretary of State replied to George Younger that "while the out-station may be regarded as a diminution of service, on the other hand in many respects the experience of St Andrew's College, which has successfully provided in-service courses in Edinburgh since the cessation of pre-service on the Craiglockhart campus, may be capable of further development." (4)

A further point of tension concerned teacher education in the north-east of Scotland and the claims made on behalf of Aberdeen and Dundee Colleges of Education. The initial press reaction to the STEAC report suggested that both colleges were "at risk" and that very phrase was used by an official to describe both colleges in his file note of the meeting of principals that took place on 18 December 1985. In subsequent correspondence with Alex Buchanan-Smith, MP, who had written to ask if the rumours about the closure of Aberdeen were "well founded", (5) the minister relied completely on an official's draft to the effect that "there would be serious difficulties in ensuring the viability of both Aberdeen and Dundee Colleges of Education at the levels of teacher demand anticipated in the foreseeable future. The closure of one would certainly secure the future of the other. If it is decided that a substantial reduction in the capacity of the sector was required, a choice may have to be made between Dundee, which has the superior facilities but considerable surplus accommodation, and Aberdeen, which enjoys geographical and other advantages." (6)

The same commitment to impartiality and the safeguarding of ministerial options led the SED to incur the wrath of the Dundee Board of Governors by refusing to agree to the permanent appointment of a new principal, when Illsley, who had been unwell, intimated that he intended to resign from 30 September 1986. In appointing the Vice-Principal, Derek Keatch, on a temporary acting capacity, the Board of Governors expressed its disappointment and saw the SED stance as

"discouraging to the college and to staff morale". The SED response to representations from the Board and the local branch of ALCES showed every sign of reasonableness. "There is nothing sinister as far as Dundee is concerned. It simply seems sensible for all colleges not to approve very senior staff, not just principals, when the STEAC report is under consideration." (7) The opportunism implicit in that decision is justifiable only in the context of a policy of scrupulous safeguarding of all reasonable ministerial options.

Undoubtedly, the most testing examination of the SED's commitment to impartiality involved the treatment of physical education. It certainly came as a surprise to the college system to see it reported in an appendix to the NAO report that the SED had had it in mind "for some time" to centralise all physical education training. It was even more surprising to read the suggestion that that centralisation should take place at Dunfermline. (8) The revelation by a junior minister at the DES that Scotland's two physical education centres "would be merged in the near future" was further evidence of the SED's policy. (9) However, that policy of integration was a direct response to legislation prohibiting separate training facilities for men and women. The SED file shows an exemplary listing of options as follows:

- Option A: centralise on Jordanhill.
- Option B: centralise on Dunfermline.
- Option C: centralise on Dunfermline, but merge Dunfermline with Moray House.

The summary appraisal reads:

"Our preliminary view is that the balance of educational argument will favour basing integrated provision at Dunfermline, while the maximum financial benefit would probably accrue from centralisation at Jordanhill.

Option C, however, might combine the educational advantages with some measure of financial savings arising from

1. a reduction in the overall complement of higher academic staff at a combined Moray House/Dunfermline College;
2. the use of specialist lecturers to serve both Moray House and Dunfermline campuses; and
3. disposal of some buildings and playing fields owned by Jordanhill and Moray House." (10)

Unfortunately, it has not proved possible to obtain access to the precise briefing that went before ministers on the college of education question. There is, however, considerable evidence to suggest that, in the months immediately prior to the decision-making, administrative and professional advisers were largely concerned with the rational identification and elimination of options to support the decision-making process. Moreover, in doing so, those advisers were performing a function that was a continuation of their facilitating and independent role on the Council itself.

It is not possible to demonstrate conclusively that the SED played an equally assertive role in the advice that it offered on the colleges of education, for, as has been acknowledged, the precise wording of the final advice to ministers remains inaccessible. Several factors, however, suggest that the SED looked for a radical solution. Firstly, in advance of the Secretary of State's announcement and in an obvious attempt to answer the NAO's charge of dilatoriness in its management of the colleges, the SED had intimated a movement of the staff:student ratio from 8.5:1 towards the CI figure of 10:1, and had decided on the withdrawal of the generous

8% staffing allowance for research and development. Moreover, the two PGCE courses had been extended from 32 to 36 weeks "without any compensating adjustment in academic staff numbers". (11) These measures were clearly intended to assuage the demands of the Treasury for action, demands that had been pressing since late 1983 when a report on progress was sought. (12) The reply was to the effect that STEAC had been established and the outcome "would afford us an opportunity to present our ministers with the case, fully in context, for further rationalisation of the provision and of the resources which this might release". (13) The publication of the PAC report so soon after STEAC was bound to have intensified the pressure for drastic action.

Secondly, the SED files indicate that the internal discussions had a preferred outcome. Thus, there was an acknowledgement that "it would be extremely helpful if the Council articulated a regional dimension (for a college's province) in terms of a radius of a hundred rather than fifty miles". The glare was also turned on institutions with a relatively narrow academic base, such as Craigie and Dunfermline, on the grounds that "to provide the richest learning experience, teacher education centres should embrace as wide an area of that work as possible". (14) And the SED note of the meeting of Principals held on 18 December 1985 praised the Principal of Aberdeen College for expressing a preference for a continuation of Aberdeen and Dundee on a split-site basis, rather than "the two half-colleges that exist at present"; while the Principal of Moray House was castigated as "the prime architect of a fudge" of retaining all centres but reducing the number involved in pre-service training, an option that clearly grated with a civil servant who was intent on securing college closures.

The final piece of evidence concerns the SED official's handling of the extremely audacious letter written by Lord James on behalf of Dunfermline College of Physical Education. (15) Lord James had argued that on educational grounds

there was a case for transferring Jordanhill students to Dunfermline College of Physical Education. Officials replied that there was, nevertheless, an important financial counter-argument. To Lord James's claim that Dunfermline College of Physical Education preferred to be "free-standing", it was countered that "to have a single college devoted to a single secondary subject ignores economies of scale to an extent which is quite exceptional in the current financial climate". (16) Lord James had also suggested that if Dunfermline College had to link with another institution he would prefer that institution to be Heriot-Watt University, along the lines of the Edinburgh College of Art, rather than Moray House, "where relationships were poor" and where "student unrest" was common. Against the Heriot-Watt suggestion, SED reminded Lord James that STEAC had argued against "any merging of the distinct sectors of higher education, apart from the fact that Heriot-Watt lacked any educational faculty". Finally, to counter Lord James's suggestion that Moray House's academic reputation "did fall away rather in the '70s", it was claimed that its new principal "has achieved significant improvements, especially in those courses which have had to be redesigned to meet the challenge of external validation". All of that evidence suggests that, for all their apparent commitment to impartiality, SED appeared to favour the closure of Craigie, Dunfermline and Dundee and, in order to meet the demands for in-service provision, "out-stations" might be retained in Ayr and Dundee.

Issues facing the Secretary of State

It is possible, in the light of the preceding analysis, to identify the major pressures on the Secretary of State. These clearly related to the college of education question and to the question of the planning and funding of higher education in Scotland. As will be seen, the arrangements for the central institutions no longer proved problematic since the Secretary of State had been given a clear indication of institutional preferences and these happened to coincide with Departmental aspirations. It is possible to summarise the remaining pressures as follows:

1. a highly respected committee had recommended that three colleges of education should be closed;
2. a public report of the Comptroller and Auditor General had accused the Department of dilatoriness in its management of the college of education sector, and the Public Accounts Committee had reinforced that criticism by demonstrating that the Department had failed to secure reasonable efficiencies;
3. a significant body of public and professional opinion was in favour of retaining all colleges;
4. the need to integrate physical education training was accepted as legally binding, but a decision had to be taken as to the location of that combined training, the intake numbers clearly not justifying two centres;
5. there was an enormous avalanche of support for the individual colleges thought to be at risk, including political support from, on the one hand, a member of the Cabinet in whose constituency one of the colleges lay, and his own Parliamentary Private Secretary, in whose marginal constituency another of the vulnerable colleges was situated;
6. the STEAC report had recommended the establishment of a joint planning and funding body for higher education in Scotland and that view had the support of the educational and wider community outside the universities;

7. while a number of conditions had been set against the introduction of an overarching body, the evidence suggested that these conditions could be met;
8. nevertheless, the weight of university opinion was strongly against any change on the grounds that it was essential to look upon the universities as part of an international community of scholarship;
9. the Secretary of State's own anti-devolutionist instincts favoured the universities' approach to the problem rather than that of STEAC.

The Secretary of State therefore faced a range of pressures - educational, financial and political - and, in what was one of the early pressure points in his tenure as Secretary of State for Scotland, it was important that he was able to demonstrate that he could reconcile these conflicting pressures.

Government Decisions

Malcolm Rifkind announced his decisions on the STEAC report on 17 July 1986. There were two general principles underpinning his decisions. Firstly, he accepted the STEAC recommendation that "training should continue to be provided in specialist institutions". That recommendation was accepted "in principle, while not ruling out entirely the possibility of some other arrangement if circumstances appeared to warrant it". (17) That clearly demonstrated the Secretary of State's own view that teacher education centres might be integrated with other institutions of higher education. In the ensuing debate only one speaker - Russell Johnston - questioned that principle, considering it "to lack the smack of fervour" about the college system. (18) In reply, Rifkind referred to experience elsewhere in the UK where teacher training institutions were occasionally attached to other

establishments. He did not wish to rule out the possibility that at some future date consideration might be given to that matter.

The second principle adopted was that, while there was clear evidence of over-capacity in the system, "there would be merit in seeking to retain, if practicable, a fairly wide geographical spread of provision". He had accordingly decided against closure of any college of education and sought to achieve the necessary capacity reductions in other ways. The decisions he intimated were as follows:

- (a) the training of men physical education teachers at Jordanhill College would cease;
- (b) the training of physical education teachers, both men and women, "will be centralised on the site of the present Dunfermline College of Physical Education";
- (c) Dunfermline College itself "will be merged with Moray House College of Education under a single governing body";
- (d) Aberdeen and Dundee Colleges of Education were to merge on their existing sites under a single governing body;
- (e) all colleges of education, whether or not directly affected by the organisational changes intimated, were "to take early and strenuous measures to dispose of surplus accommodation on any of their sites"; and

- (f) there would be a "further programme of course rationalisation designed to make the best use of manpower and facilities throughout the college of education sector".

Clearly, (e) above was "a key feature of the strategy". Accordingly, the Secretary of State intimated that he would "review the position again next year in the light of progress made". He felt obliged to make it clear that, "if over-capacity remains a real problem, site closures will then become inevitable." That, indeed, became the keynote of the ministerial response to questions in the course of the debate. He repeatedly referred to the need to reduce surplus capacity and was adamant that, "if within the year institutions had not been successful in disposal of their surplus accommodation, college closures will become unavoidable". (19)

Practically every speaker in the debate welcomed the ministerial decision not to close any college. Even Donald Dewar, leading for the opposition, congratulated the Secretary of State for accepting, even if "half-heartedly", the arguments about the geographical spread of colleges throughout Scotland. There was a particularly warm response on the Craigie decision. Perhaps the most effusive of the tributes was paid by Barry Henderson, who congratulated the Secretary of State on "a wise and imaginative statement", which had something of what he called "Malcolm's magic". In his view, the minister's statement "will be regarded as better educationally, financially and geographically than what was first proposed". (20)

Naturally, considerable concern and disappointment were expressed with regard to the Jordanhill position. Donald Dewar, Michael Hirst, Charles Kennedy and Jim Craigen all registered these emotions. Jim Craigen excited the scorn of the Secretary of State when he referred to "the political decision to smash the physical education facilities at Jordanhill", (21) earning the dismissive retort from the Secretary of State that Craigen's was "an extraordinary and absurd remark". (22)

In replying to the concerns expressed, Rifkind identified a number of factors which had led to that decision. In the first place, European legislation required that there should be a discontinuation of separate physical education provision for men and women; secondly, Dunfermline College of Physical Education was purpose-built for physical education; thirdly, by concentrating all physical education students at Cramond it would be possible "substantially to reduce the present under-use of capacity at Dunfermline"; fourthly, the numbers of students involved were insufficient to justify retaining two mixed-sex centres of physical education; and, finally, the minister invoked arguments about quality. Here his stance was somewhat ambiguous. At one point he indicated that his announcement "does not reflect in any way on the quality of the work done" at Jordanhill. In the next breath the minister stated that "the educational arguments which were put to me, and which I have accepted, pointed overwhelmingly to Dunfermline being the site for physical education". (23)

Several speakers - Donald Dewar, Gordon Wilson and Ernie Ross - expressed their concern at the Dundee/Aberdeen merger. Dewar considered it an odd decision, given that the two institutions were more than sixty miles apart. In reply, Rifkind indicated that there were "educational reasons . . . why the number at each of these colleges was approaching a level . . . where it was not possible to give the diversity of training and experience that was educationally preferable". (24) There was a need to merge the two colleges so that rationalisation of courses could be achieved. Gordon Wilson and Donald Dewar both thought that the decision on Dundee and Aberdeen was "closure by the back door" or a mere "stay of execution until after the next general election". Rifkind rejected both charges, drawing attention to the fact that Dundee "has about one-fifth of the students that it needs to utilise its full capacity". In the Secretary of State's view, the surest way of securing the future of Dundee and Aberdeen, as of other teacher education institutions, was the disposal of surplus capacity.

The SIT proposal attracted less attention. As has been noted, it was not unanimously welcomed by the central institutions and, reflecting that, one commentator considered that it was "an over-elaborate idea" which "left the other CIs dangling". (25) It appears that only Turmeau, Principal of Napier, was strongly committed to it and the Departmental files show that he visited the SED on 17 December 1985 to express his support. He was advised to urge COPADOCI "to put in a strong submission" because the proposal was still "completely open". (26) The Departmental file also indicates the mood of the Department prior to the announcement to the House of Commons. It showed that the proposal had a mixed reception even within the central institution sector. Of the technological CIs only Glasgow College of Technology was directly opposed, but those outside the proposed grouping had serious reservations. It was contended "that a SIT would create a two-tier system, down-grade other central institutions, and further confuse the public perception of their role". On 7 July the minister, Allan Stewart, had a meeting with COPADOCI at which "it emerged that the technical and central institution joint position was that they would only support SIT if it had university status". That position was subsequently confirmed in discussions with the Secretary of State. The Department concluded that "given the impracticality of conceding university status in the foreseeable future, it was concluded that a feasibility study would be a fruitless but expensive exercise". (27)

The minister announced his decision on the SIT recommendation in a written answer on 17 July 1986. (28) The statement referred to "the differing opinions" about the SIT recommendation and noted that "there is a sharp division of opinion, not only among the central institutions at large, but also among those particular establishments which would be directly involved if a SIT were established". The Secretary of State indicated that the principals have "collectively made it clear to me that their support for a SIT would be virtually conditional on it being given

university status". Following the advice of STEAC itself, the Secretary of State argued that he "did not regard university status for individual central institutions or groups of them to be a practical proposition in planning for the 1990s". (29) In view of the relative lack of enthusiasm for the SIT proposal among its potential members, he decided to reject the Council's recommendation of a feasibility study.

The Secretary of State made a provisional announcement about the planning and funding of higher education in Scotland in his announcement on 17 July 1986. He made it clear that the government required advice before making a final judgement. He decided, therefore, to defer a decision pending receipt of that advice from the committee chaired by Lord Croham, which was reviewing the UGC, and from the ABRC. That announcement was a disappointment to some. For example, Donald Dewar indicated that he and his Labour colleagues "would have welcomed the decision in principle to set up an overarching body to plan and shape higher education in Scotland". (30) The only other speaker who referred to the matter was Gordon Wilson, who, on behalf of the Scottish National Party, "registered disappointment at the Secretary of State's failure to grasp the opportunity given by STEAC for an overarching body". (31) There appeared to be an acceptance, then, that the Secretary of State was entitled to await the advice on a key issue relating to the restructuring of higher education in Scotland.

The advice from the ABRC was positive and clear. Since access to the research councils was already safeguarded by the research council charters, they "could see no reason why Scottish universities should have special safeguards to offset any possible disadvantage they may suffer as a result of receiving their block grants from a new funding body which might apply different standards in competing with other UK universities for research council funds". (32) That reply should have come as no surprise, for the evidence submitted to STEAC by two of the research councils made that very point. ESRC had written: "In considering the research

capacity, the ESRC's perspective is transbinary - that is, it will look for good proposals from any quarter." (33) The Science and Engineering Research Council stated: "The council's charter allows it to act widely in the support of research, subject to overall limitations based on guidance from the Department of Education and Science . . . A basic principle of SERCs operation is that in discharging these responsibilities it recognises no distinction between the countries of the United Kingdom. Scottish institutions contend for research grants and training awards on a footing indistinguishable from their English, Welsh and Northern Ireland counterparts." (34) Indeed, so manifest was the obligation of the research councils that one commentator dismissed the universities' concern as "beside the point". (35)

On the other hand, the advice from Croham was far from unequivocal. That committee's response to the Secretary of State's request for advice was that it raised "questions of a political, social and cultural nature which concerned the totality of higher education in Scotland". (36) Its own visit to Scotland had convinced it that there were "very few substantial examples of neglect or indifference" suffered by the universities at the hands of the UGC. (37) The committee, indeed, felt that "the main loss would be the UGC's present ability to provide an overview of university provision in Great Britain as a whole". (38) Having briefly outlined the operation of peer review systems in the UK, the committee concluded that "none of the above types of peer review need be affected by separate funding arrangements in Scotland". (39) However, the committee could see difficulties in the resource consequences of peer review procedures and concluded that, almost inevitably, a "Scottish funding agency" might not reach the same funding conclusions as the UGC, even when there was agreement on the quality of the research.

Despite that advice, members of STEAC continued to lobby on behalf of the recommendations of the Council. Early in 1987, McCallum and Bone met the new Minister for Education, John MacKay, at their request. When the minister

contended that "most of the Scottish universities were opposed to being separated from the rest of the UK" McCallum described the universities' concern as "emotional" and urged the establishment of an overarching body for Scotland. (40) The same tenacity of purpose was demonstrated in the meeting McCallum and Cuming had with members of the Croham Committee on 10 March 1986. Finally, McCallum continued to correspond with the Secretary of State after the publication of the report and one of his letters stated that "(his) own view had strengthened since the STEAC report was published that the planning and funding council is the right way forward. . . . The so-called binary system in England creates a multiplicity of problems which the UGC and the NAB cannot solve by discussion." (41)

Notwithstanding the advice from the STEAC, from the ABRC, from Croham, from his senior civil servants and professional advisers, and despite the persistent lobbying of McCallum and his colleagues, when he came to announce his decision on the STEAC report to Parliament on 1 April 1987, Malcolm Rifkind preferred his own counsel:

"I share the views of the universities that they should continue to be, and be seen to be, an integral part of the British university system and believe that that might be prejudiced by removing them from the British funding framework of the UGC and its successor." (42)

He acknowledged the difficulty identified by STEAC and felt that it should be resolved, in line with the Croham recommendation, by establishing a Scottish committee of the Universities' Funding Council (UFC), the body recommended to succeed the UGC. That committee would bring together representatives from the universities, from the non-university sector and others to take an overview of Scottish provision. The Secretary of State would be entitled to place advice before

the committee and the committee would be required to "have regard to" the Secretary of State's advice. Donald Dewar's immediate reaction was that the announcement was "a recipe for muddle and confusion", (43) and maintained that what was offered was "a poor apology for an effective co-ordinating body . . . a nod in the direction of consultation, a little bit of window-dressing." In response, Rifkind urged the opposition to "appreciate that what we have announced today provides the Secretary of State for Scotland for the first time with a locus with regard to universities to ensure that the interests of Scottish higher education are taken into account". (44)

Other critics, notably Bruce Millan and Tom Clarke, criticised the Secretary of State's anti-devolutionary stance. Rifkind was quick to remind them of the view taken by the Labour Party in the mid-70s and contended that the considerations that led the last Labour government to believe that the integrity of the British university system should be protected "are as powerful now as they were then". (45)

The Secretary of State elaborated on his decision in a letter to McCallum, obviously intended to assuage the latter's disappointment. "Given the view of the universities," he wrote, "I feel that it would not be desirable now to separate the funding of the Scottish universities from the UK-based system. Moreover, I am sure we can tackle in other ways the crucial problems you so clearly identify . . . by building on the Croham proposal for a Scottish Committee of the UFC and by providing for the first time a locus for the Secretary of State for Scotland in relation to the Scottish universities." Realising that members of the council would be disappointed by his decision, he sought to reassure McCallum by emphasising "that your work has been invaluable and without it I doubt whether we could have secured the proposed Scottish Committee of the UFC or the new role for the Secretary of State". (46) On the same day the Scottish Office wrote to institutions to inform them of the changes that had been announced and that had been

incorporated in the White Paper. (47) By emphasising that "the Scottish universities would be able to remain part of the British university sector" while yet retaining their "Scottish dimension", the letter sought, unconvincingly, to convey the dawn of a new era. (48)

The Reaction to the Ministerial Announcement

As has been noted, the political response to the Secretary of State's acceptance of the non-closure option was favourable. MPs, particularly those who had involved themselves in the campaigning, were full of praise for the Secretary of State's judgement. Outside parliament there was a range of responses. In the college of education system there was relief, rather than elation, that there would be no closures, and both the NUS and ALCES claimed that their respective campaigns had been vindicated. Four national newspapers acknowledged the "reprieve" that had been granted for colleges at risk, but only the professional journal, *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland*, which is widely regarded for its political neutrality, felt able to be commendatory. In a leading article entitled "The logic of geography", it considered that the Secretary of State's package of measures was "acutely judged" and that it "neatly accommodated conflicting pressures". (49) The following week the same editor claimed that the Secretary of State had "skilfully defused the controversy over the colleges of education". (50) The absence of elation was to be explained by the Secretary of State's decision to review the position within a year. ALCES judged that that "left a threat hanging over every college". (51) *The Glasgow Herald* considered that there would be "few observers who would not regard his (Rifkind's) decision as an example of government electionitis". It offered "the cynical interpretation" that the threat hanging over the colleges would be enacted after the general election. (52) Even *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland* wondered whether the Public Accounts Committee might some day see the Secretary of State's package merely as "a cosmetic exercise". (53)

Undoubtedly, the mood in the colleges was strongly influenced by the decision on mergers. The National Union of Students sought to stave off the inevitable by urging Allan Stewart to call a moratorium on any decision until "a proper review be undertaken". (54) In both Aberdeen and Dundee concern was expressed at the possible rationalisation of courses with resultant redundancies. However, it was the physical education issue and the merger of Dunfermline College of Physical Education with Moray House that attracted most critical comment. ALCES and NUS issued a joint statement to the effect that the proposed merger was "absurd". They felt that "given Dunfermline's unique and specific nature, it is vital to the daily running of such an institution that the specialist management and administration remain in control". (55) Echoing that thought, the Vice-Principal at Dunfermline sought to undermine the merger proposal by implying that standards would be put at risk. He claimed that the "close relationships among management, staff and students that have underpinned developments at this college" would be lost, and feared that Dunfermline's priorities would be set aside by its "large and powerful neighbour". (56)

The day after the announcement in parliament, the Principal of Dunfermline College of Education wrote aggressively to the Secretary of State demanding answers to certain questions which implied that the merger was a serious misjudgement and simply a way of enabling Moray House to solve its surplus accommodation and financial problems. (57) Bone, for whom the closure of the Scottish School of Physical Education must have been a devastating blow, responded almost with resignation to the announcement. He said, "I am disappointed and don't believe training PE teachers in isolation from other teachers makes educational or economic sense. Since Mr Rifkind has left the college situation very much as it was, I am only sorry he could not have left our facilities as they were." (58)

The Director of the Scottish School of Physical Education, Bernard Wright, adopted a more militant stance: "We can see no possible educational, economic or geographic reason for this decision. So, when it is pointed out to us that Mr Rifkind's Parliamentary Private Secretary was Lord James Douglas-Hamilton and that Dunfermline is in his constituency, and that it is a marginal constituency, then we find it difficult to see any explanation other than political patronage. . . . At its kindest, we believe that Mr Rifkind has not been well advised." (59) Repeating the arguments set out in a previous letter, Wright then went on to urge the Secretary of State to "listen to logic and reason and change his mind". (60) He repeated the point made in the earlier submission from Jordanhill that two physical education centres for both men and women, one in the west and one in the east, would have been ideal. However, if there had to be one centre, then he was emphatically of the view that it should be in the west. He then went on to pour scorn on some of the arguments that had apparently held sway with the Secretary of State, claiming that the SSPE facilities were superior to those at Dunfermline and maintaining that it was professionally inappropriate for a special group of teachers to be trained "in isolation in their own discipline".

The ill-feeling was intensified by the subsequent interjection of Molly Abbott, former Principal of Dunfermline College of Physical Education. The report of an interview with her in *The Glasgow Herald* was headlined "Merger plan will bring PE to its knees in Scotland". (61) In the interview, Abbott appeared to strike a triumphalist note in seeing the Secretary of State's decision as "a victory for the Edinburgh college over Jordanhill". (62) She was quoted as follows: "The reason Dunfermline won . . . is that it has been so much better than the SSPE. I am not being immodest . . . The evidence is there in reports from the Council for National Academic Awards and the General Teaching Council. The reason we were better was quite simply our autonomy. We could respond quickly to needs whereas the SSPE had to go through not only its own committee but the governors of

Jordanhill." (63) In the same interview she castigated Moray House, where she had formerly been a member of staff, as "a bit of a shambles . . . It did not seem to have any clear focus of accountability. It seemed to be dominated by the trade unions." (64) The Abbott interview provoked an immediate reply from Wright. (65) Within days, he wrote to *The Glasgow Herald* pointing out "the inaccurate and misleading comparisons" she had made. As far as he was concerned, Dunfermline had been better than SSPE "in only one respect and that is its lobbying for support from the Scottish Office and MPs". On all professional issues, he claimed, Dunfermline had to "follow the lead given by the SSPE". A poignant statement of the impact of the closure of SSPE was provided by Professor W Fletcher, who convened the SSPE committee of the Jordanhill Board of Governors from 1967 to 1983. He stated:

"The Scottish School was unjustly sacrificed on the altar of rationalisation and it closed in June 1990 when the last cohort of students graduated. I was glad that I was not the Chairman to see its demise. That outstanding school meant much to me, but the man who was really, almost mortally, wounded was its Director, Bernard Wright." (66)

It was perhaps understandable that the response to the ministerial decision on STEAC should concentrate on closures and proposed mergers and did not dwell on the wider question of monotechnic teacher education. That was surprising, given the degree of support in the public discussion for the idea of integrating teacher education with other institutions. Nevertheless, there was one such statement: it rejected the "separatist solution" (67) and urged the merger of physical education "into the wider perspective of the universities". (68)

The creation of a Scottish Committee of the Universities' Funding Council was broadly in line with the request made by the courts of the Scottish universities in May 1984, when they sensed their marginalisation both north and south of the border. It was to be expected, therefore, that the ministerial decision to create the new committee would be welcomed in university circles. Hills had continued to lobby the Secretary of State right up to the point of the announcement. He urged the Secretary of State to avoid over-emphasising the establishment of a peer review system intended to keep Scotland in touch with the rest of the UK, since "many Scottish universities are just as interested in their links with their European counterparts". (69) Alexander had been replaced at Stirling by John Forty, who admitted that he "remained to be convinced of the value of the STEAC proposals . . . I am still of the view that we should try to keep the UK university system intact." (70) Williams claimed to be "disappointed but not surprised that STEAC's main recommendation was rejected, but the universities were not ready for such a move". (71) He felt, however, that "by the early 1990s it would be realised that there must be a forum concerned with the broad sweep of higher education rather than the sectional interests of the universities and the colleges". (72)

Outside the universities there were some expressions of positive support. McCallum wrote to the Secretary of State claiming that, although the minister's proposals "are regarded as a second-best solution, I think that, with a good Scottish committee, it can be a very good second-best". (73)

Some sections of the press approved of the fact that the new UFC "will have a powerful Scottish committee" (74) and *The Scotsman's* reporter pointed out that the universities' "strong political clout with Mr Rifkind" had enabled them "to get the best of both worlds". (75) Beyond these observations, the main public reaction was negative. It represented "a timid retreat" (76); "a missed opportunity" (77) and

"a tragic lost chance" (78); "a mere cosmetic" (79); and "a great disappointment which places the future of Scottish universities in jeopardy" (80). The greatest regret was that the minister had missed the opportunity to create "a unitary system of tertiary education in Scotland" (81); he had failed to realise that "in a country as small as Scotland it makes no sense to run two strands of higher education in isolation from each other". (82) The result was that Scotland's higher education would remain "desperately divided and fissile". (83) The new Scottish committee would be a mere "talking shop" (84) with the obligation only "to have regard to" the views of the Secretary of State, thus leaving the "pernicious binary divide . . . as wide as ever". (85) Perhaps the most despairing comment was expressed by Kennedy of RGIT, who for years had campaigned on behalf of the central institutions for "equal results for equal work". He felt that the outcome of the creation of the Scottish committee was that the central institutions would remain "the poor cousins to their university counterparts" (86)

During the period of the STEAC and the consultation that followed the most articulate and consistently argued analysis was provided by the editor of the *THES*. In the period leading up to and beyond the ministerial decision that same journal continued its stirring campaign in favour of the repatriation of the universities. The writer indicated his impatience by an editorial entitled "The Poverty of Unionism", (87) which regretted that "so far there had been little outward sign of a strategy emerging for higher education in Scotland", despite the "bold outline" provided by the STEAC report. After the ministerial decision on higher education, the journal carried three further articles. The first of these - "Defeatism in Scotland" (88) - regretted that "a historic opportunity had been lost to create a more coherent and more national system of higher education in Scotland". The government's proposals left universities out of line with political opinion in Scotland and they were warned that "institutions out of step with the march of the nation faced a bleak future". The second article - "The Scottish Question" (89) -

argued along similar lines. It maintained that the universities' "instinctive fear of radical change" had been mistaken for their final decision on "the Scottish question". Furthermore, the ministerial decision "frustrated effective settlement of the central institutions and colleges of education". Finally, the third article - "Immobility in Scotland" (90) - criticised the "poverty of imagination of the Scottish Secretary and his ministerial colleagues". It repeated the danger that Scottish higher education may get "dangerously out of step with the march of the Scottish nation". The most grievous consequence of the government policy was its effect on non-university higher education. It was now time for the SED "to rethink its traditional scepticism about the value of large multi-faculty (and uppity ?) institutions as opposed to small monotechnic (and deferential ?) ones". Failure to take positive action on the universities meant that the non-university sector was "trapped within the immobile framework of an unsatisfactory policy".

The Aftermath: Higher Education following STEAC

The period following the ministerial announcement was an extremely difficult one for the college of education sector. On 4 August 1986 the Department wrote to colleges informing them of a range of new requirements. There would be a period of course rationalisation; there would be a rigid scrutiny of staffing, and the requirement imposed of an hour-by-hour record of each member of academic staff to be submitted to the Department. And, thirdly, there would be a rigorous scrutiny of space, and institutions placed under pressure either to dispose of surplus capacity or to lease it. All three aspects of the policy were pursued with some vigour by the Scottish Office. Undoubtedly, the main feature of the college of education sector in session 1986/87 was the implementation of the Secretary of State's decision on mergers. Two working parties were established, one to deal with the Aberdeen/Dundee merger, the other with the transfer of physical education to Cramond and the merger of Dunfermline College with Moray House. Neither of these working parties proved straightforward. The interim report of the

Dundee/Aberdeen merger (91) led to student occupations. (92) Students at Dundee claimed that the report was "totally biased towards Aberdeen" and suggested that Dundee was "destined to become a mere satellite of the core college at Aberdeen". (93) The working party had recommended the rationalisation of secondary training which would leave Dundee without any secondary students from 1987 onwards. On the other hand, by way of compensation, it was proposed that youth and community courses would be centralised in Dundee, a proposal that excited substantial opposition in Aberdeen and led to the submission of a petition signed by some two thousand people. In due course, the Secretary of State assessed the report in a more favourable light, claiming that "The merger can create a new and powerful institution, able to make an important and distinctive contribution within the college of education sector as a whole and should produce a more cost-effective college." (94)

The Moray House/Dunfermline College of Physical Education/Jordanhill College merger discussions were marked by an even greater degree of acrimony. Anger erupted at the very first meeting of the Quadripartite Working Party when the agenda disclosed that one of the items for consideration was the rationalisation of all the courses at the SSPE. From Jordanhill's point of view, such courses were not for discussion since the Secretary of State's decision had related only to the training of physical education teachers. No sooner was that issue resolved than a fundamental disagreement arose with regard to the interpretation of the Secretary of State's intentions. Dunfermline College representatives argued that the Secretary of State had sought to merge the two colleges under a single governing body but with the two separate academic boards continuing to function. Against that, Moray House representatives argued that the Secretary of State had in mind an integration of academic senior management and committee structures. Discussions were suspended pending clarification of the Secretary of State's view. When it became clear that the Secretary of State favoured an integrated model, discussion made

significant headway, and a report was produced, (95) but not before the Principal of Dunfermline College of Physical Education, Jean Carroll, resigned amidst considerable publicity, in which she dismissed the merger plan as "total folly". (96)

In due course, the Secretary of State accepted both reports and, from 1 April 1987, a new era began for the college of education sector: it would consist of five colleges, including the Northern College (the former Aberdeen and Dundee colleges) and Moray House College (incorporating the Scottish Centre for Physical Education, Movement and Leisure Studies).

However, no study of the STEAC report could end in the year 1987, for the following five years were marked by perhaps the most profound changes higher education in Scotland has witnessed in the course of this century. Two of the most important changes were direct developments of issues that had been of major concern to STEAC - the institutional context of teacher education and the national arrangements for planning and funding of higher education.

The years immediately following the publication of STEAC saw a remarkable change in the institutional context of teacher education. STEAC had recommended that a review should be undertaken of education at the University of Stirling. There is no doubt that that recommendation was intended as a sop to the colleges of education, for the implication was that the Stirling Education Department was anomalous and might require to be discontinued. The report duly appeared on 4 May 1988 and turned out to be an enthusiastic endorsement of the work of the Stirling department. (97) It was described as producing "well-trained and enthusiastic probationer teachers"; to offer "highly regarded and innovative in-service training courses"; and to have "undertaken valuable classroom-based research". It was described as offering courses of high quality in a "relatively cost-effective method". Far from leading to a discontinuation of teacher education at the

University of Stirling, the review positively endorsed that training and therefore strongly reinforced the view, contrary to the recommendation of STEAC, that teacher education could flourish within a university context.

The STEAC report had also, of course, recommended that colleges of education should seek to foster links with the universities. By the beginning of session 1990/91, Moray House had established itself as the Institute of Education of Heriot-Watt University; by April 1993, Jordanhill College had become incorporated as the Faculty of Education of Strathclyde University and Craigie had become the Faculty of Education of Paisley University. In the same year, St Andrew's College became an associated college of the University of Glasgow, and the Northern College had its courses validated by the Open University. As if to mark an intensification of the process of integration, Moray House and the University of Edinburgh intimated on 23 October 1996 that they were considering a merger of the two institutions. It is true that STEAC had recommended that colleges of education should seek to establish "close links with the universities". However, these various initiatives represented a significant development beyond that rather lukewarm recommendation. How is that transformation to be explained?

A study of the formal and public documentation on these institutional alliances indicates that a primary motive for collaboration was academic. For example, the Moray House account (98) specifically referred to the enhancement of the academic life of Moray House and identified academic benefits for both institutions in the linkage with Heriot-Watt University. The corresponding Jordanhill document, (99) invoking research evidence on successful academic mergers, defended the need to base collaborative proposals on academic grounds. However, if such academic rhetoric had any validity, why did the arguments fail to carry support during the STEAC review? The post-STEAC initiatives, therefore, require an alternative explanation. Throughout the work of the STEAC Bone was a champion of

integrating teacher education institutions with universities, although he realised that his fellow principals did not share his enthusiasm. Perhaps Bone was finally able to persuade his colleagues of the wisdom of his preferred institutional arrangement. When questioned on the thinking behind the Jordanhill initiative, (100) Bone indicated that he had been strongly influenced by the Moray House linkage with Heriot-Watt. What, then, was the motive behind that association?

Kirk's analysis of that development (101) showed that several factors were at work. Firstly, the new Conservative government, with an evangelical Thatcherite as Minister for Education, was concerned to create a competitive context for higher education, one in which institutions sought to flourish, if necessary at the expense of others, by out-doing them in their capacity to attract students and funds. A significant aim of the linkage with Heriot-Watt University was to create a strategic alliance that would strengthen the institution's capacity for survival in the new climate. Secondly, there was evidence that take-overs were imminent. The Scottish Office had devoted substantial senior management time to the creation of a Conference of Centrally-funded Institutions and had imposed on these institutions a common pattern of governance and institutional control. The principal of one of these institutions, who happened to be a member of the Moray House Board of Governors, produced a paper (102) which was severely critical of higher education in Scotland. In his view, it had far too many small and inefficient institutions. The answer was to reduce the number of institutions to fifteen. As part of that plan, Turmeau argued for four colleges in the Edinburgh area - Edinburgh College of Art, Queen Margaret College, the Scottish College of Textiles and Moray House College - to merge with Napier. At Moray House it was decided that, if smaller institutions were to be forced to merge, then it would be preferable to seek an alliance with a university, a premier league institution rather than one in the first or second division.

Thirdly, reference was made to important developments taking place south of the border. The White Paper of 1987, (103) which established the UFC and its Scottish committee, gave notice that the government intended to reinforce the binary line by creating a separate and parallel funding council for non-university institutions, the PCFC; it also proposed that the major polytechnics, having outgrown the close tutelage of local authorities, would be given self-governing status. That measure was enacted in the legislation of 1988. Anyone observing the impact of incorporation on the polytechnics - for example, from a position on the Council of the CNAA (104) - would realise that their institutional aspirations had not been sated: they sought the power to award their own degrees. Furthermore, since the polytechnics were responsible for some 85% of CNAA's validation and review work, it was predictable that, if the polytechnics won degree-granting powers, CNAA would become largely redundant. In that event, institutions without degree-granting powers would be vulnerable. That was a powerful reason why Moray House sought an association with Heriot-Watt University.

The government's White Paper of 1991 (105) intimated an intention to foster the further development of the polytechnics. However, it also announced a range of even more remarkable initiatives: not only would polytechnics gain degree-granting powers, with the concomitant demise of the CNAA, but they could, provided they met criteria of size and academic coverage, entitle themselves universities, with the approval of the Privy Council. The most remarkable change of all was that the UFC and the CPFC would be disbanded and separate funding councils would be established for England, for Wales, for Scotland, and for Northern Ireland. The White Paper granted Scotland what the STEAC debate had failed to deliver and the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 established the new structure.

The SHEFC began its operations in April 1993. Under its aegis, all twenty-one institutions of higher education came to have constitutional parity: they were bound

by the same Financial Memorandum; they were subject to the same regulations; and they entered a funding regime in which allocations were consistent, transparent, and largely formula-driven. Indeed, there had been created an integrated and coherent structure of higher education in Scotland. The ancient inequalities against which Cuming and his fellow CI principals had campaigned so vigorously were eliminated. The White Paper granted Scotland what the STEAC debate had failed to deliver: an integrated system of higher education.

What, then, is the significance of the STEAC report? On one interpretation it provided a rehearsal of the arguments that facilitated the eventual repatriation of the universities and paved the way for an integrated system. It was an essential stepping-stone on the way to a rationally ordered structure of higher education that could articulate fully with the school system. An alternative interpretation is that STEAC was of little relevance. The revised higher education system of 1992 was forced on Scotland by developments in England. On this view, if no decision had been taken to fuse the two funding councils in England, Scotland would have had to persist with the unpopular and inelegant compromise enshrined in the Scottish Committee of the UFC. So far from campaigning for repatriation, the Scottish universities found themselves in a position in which repatriation was inevitable: it was the only option left. STEAC was, indeed, a missed opportunity: the opportunity was missed by a combination of insecurity and sectional self-interest, in this case on the part of the universities. It was perhaps fortunate that subsequent events conspired to establish what Scottish hesitancy might have rejected yet again.

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CHAPTER 7 STEAC AND MODELS OF THE POLICY- MAKING PROCESS

Introduction

Research in the field of policy studies has two broad purposes. Firstly, it is concerned to chart the process of policy formulation, to unravel the interplay of influences, and to identify the key pressures - individual, institutional and social - that were exerted on decision-making in a political context. The fulfilment of that purpose marks an extension and enrichment of human understanding of a particular policy-making episode. Secondly, however, policy studies research should contribute more widely to our understanding of the policy-making process, either by requiring a modification to established theoretical interpretations of that process, or by refining familiar modes of investigation and by sharpening the analytical tools of the policy researcher's trade. Previous chapters of this study have sought to discharge the researcher's first obligation to analyse in detail a key episode of policy-making. This chapter is concerned with the second, and arguably more important, responsibility, which is to relate the study to the wider context of policy research by testing the explanatory power of existing models of the policy-making process.

The STEAC process provides an ideal, if demanding, context in which to test the validity of models of policy-making. While it is a relatively self-contained episode it has strategic significance in the development of higher education policy in Scotland. Moreover, the transparency of the STEAC process, the fullness and explicitness of the documentary record, and the accessibility of its evidential base, all contribute to make it an appropriate case study against which the rigour of certain widely accepted analytical approaches to policy-making can be assessed.

Three such approaches will be evaluated:

- (a) the policy community as developed by McPherson and Raab, and its variants - the "leadership class" by Humes and the "spider's web" by Marker;
- (b) incrementalism, as developed in particular by Lindblom;
- (c) the "revised model" proposed by Humes, in which policy-making is envisaged as the interaction between ideology, people, institutions, issues and culture.

In each case, the defining features of the model will be assessed to determine their degree of applicability to the STEAC process.

STEAC and the Policy Community

As developed by McPherson and Raab, the policy community denoted "a set of persons or groups which stretches across the divide between government and outside interests and which is generally involved in the making and implementation of policy". (1) While his notion of the leadership class pre-dated McPherson and Raab's study, Humes has acknowledged that there is "a fair measure of overlap" between the two formulations. (2) Subsequent commentators have relied heavily on the concept of the policy community in their analysis of policy developments in Scotland, although Marker was the first to suggest that the policy community had, over the years, become "factorised" and that for the period he studied between 1959 and 1981 it was more reasonable to refer to "a policy sector consisting of a network of policy communities". (3) Despite these variations in emphasis, there is agreement about the membership of the policy community: senior civil servants, Her Majesty's Inspectorate, directors of education, college principals, and leading office bearers of such bodies as the CCC, the GTC, and the SEB. According to Humes, these were the people "who, collectively, set a large part of the agenda of

Scottish education and contribute significantly to the formulation and implementation of policy". (4) For McPherson and Raab the policy community was "the community of individuals who mattered". (5) While some members of the policy community might, at different times, carry more weight than others - for example, Marker differentiates between "core" and "peripheral" groups (6) - the basic thesis is that policy emerges "through interaction and negotiation between SED and a relatively small group of individuals", (7) an alliance between government officials and representatives of "the great and the good", chosen because they share the same "assumptive world" and demonstrate that degree of "deference and trust" which makes them appropriate agents of collaboration with government.

From one point of view, it is reasonable for the government to establish alliances with members of a policy community: they constitute a ready source of advice for non-specialists in the SED; and they are people whose goodwill and co-operation will be required in the implementation of policy. Besides, they are influential figures in the wider educational community whose involvement might help to minimise public criticism of policy while in no way risking any loss of SED's control over the policy process. In that way, professional consultation could be reduced to what Humes has called "the management of consent". (8) What support for that conception of the policy community can be found in the STEAC process?

At first glance, the policy community would appear to have little or no part to play in that process. STEAC was a major public consultative exercise: the Council's terms of reference were announced in parliament, as was its membership; an open invitation was issued for the submission of evidence; the publication of the Council's report was the focus of extensive and sustained public and professional debate, resulting in a further round of submissions from individuals, groups and institutions; and the final policy decisions were taken and justified before

parliament. How is that open, transparent and participative approach to policy-making to be reconciled with an approach which implies that policy is formulated by a relatively small group of government advisers in collusion with selected high status members of the educational community noted for their compliance? And is there not a world of difference between STEAC's attempt at systematic and corporate decision-making on the basis of a rational appraisal of the evidence and the confidential exchanges between senior civil servants and college principals and members of the directorate that is revealed in *Governing Education*, and the even more remarkable confessions gleaned by Marker from Sir Henry Wood and senior civil servants on the informal meetings that took place in an effort to predetermine the outcome of subsequent discussion in such formal settings as the Committee of Principals? Indeed, is it not reasonable to view the two approaches to policy-making - the policy community on the one hand and the public enquiry followed by consultation on the other - as standing at opposite ends of a continuum?

These rhetorical questions imply too sharp a distinction between modes of policy-making. The concept of the policy community is now such a well established feature of the landscape of policy studies, such a widely acknowledged explanatory tool amongst political commentators, that it would be extremely surprising if the STEAC process could be analysed authoritatively without having recourse to it. Thus, for example, it is now well established that the SED is the key agent in the policy community in Scotland. In many ways, that ought not to come as a surprise. The SED is an arm of government: it is the vehicle through which the Secretary of State's policies, sanctioned by parliament, are developed and implemented. As an instrument of government, it surely has a responsibility for exercising leadership, for initiating change, and for starting up the engine of reform. There may be disagreement about the way in which the SED operates with regard to the policy community and whether - in accord with Marker's evocative

image of the spider's web - the SED sustains a network of key agencies through whose combined machinations educational policy at national level is plotted, but there is no disagreement that the SED lies at the heart of the policy community.

The STEAC process confirms that interpretation. The SED was the main instigator and principal orchestrator of that process: it established the Council; it determined its membership and terms of reference; it serviced and supported the Council's deliberations; it organised the series of engagements between the Council and such other bodies as the UGC, the NAB and the Research Councils; it analysed the evidence submitted; it bombarded the Council with a host of technical and background papers; it sequenced the agenda; it distilled the enormous volume of comments generated by the consultative process; it supported the Council's decision-making by its careful delineation of options and the advantages and disadvantages of alternative lines of action, for example, with regard to colleges of education, institutional relationships and the planning and funding of higher education in Scotland; and it placed the fruits of its own deliberations before ministers for the final determination of policy. The SED's impressive support of the work of the Council, which the Chairman fully acknowledged, (9) is interpretable as efficient agenda-setting, and provides evidence of the commitment to ensuring that every plausible option was taken into account, and of that exemplary impartiality for which the civil service is well known.

However, the SED's management of the Council and the Council's business may be seen as a powerful demonstration of its determination to control the Council and its work, in line with its own agenda. Several pieces of evidence support that interpretation. Firstly, there is no doubt that the SED acknowledged the obligation to have a position on the key issues. An internal memorandum from a senior officer of the Department read: "We must have a word about how our views may best be conveyed in the committee's considerations, and we may also want some

preliminary informal scene-setting with ministers before they have paper flung at them." (10) The memo then went on to make clear there was nothing "improper" about this, since "it would be a criticism of an informed Department if, having identified difficulties, it did not have some ideas on how best to deal with them". The same point is made in an internal memorandum dated 25 September 1984 following a visit of the head of a Scottish higher education institution: "This exchange leaves me all the more anxious to understand the difficulties which led us to set up STEAC and the solutions which have occurred to us." (11)

Secondly, the SED did, indeed, have a definite view on the major issues facing the Council. For example, with regard to the colleges of education, it was clearly committed to a reduction in their number in response to the withering condemnation of its dilatoriness and mismanagement of the system provided by the Public Accounts Committee, and its acknowledgement of the need to comply with the European directive on the integration of male and female physical education training. Besides, the cross-examining of James Scott by the Public Accounts Committee clearly showed that the SED was committed to a dispersal model, in which teacher education institutions were widely distributed throughout the country to ensure access for in-service purposes. Then, with regard to the planning and funding of higher education, the SED acknowledged that "the sharp dichotomy in the existing organisation on funding arrangements for the university and non-university sectors militates against planning and co-ordination of higher education as a whole". (12) Internally, there was a clear preference for "a Scottish Higher Education Grants Committee". Moreover, the Departmental advice to ministers was unequivocal: "I recommend that the Secretary of State should seek the agreement of colleagues to the transfer of responsibility for funding Scottish universities from the Secretary of State for Education and Science and to the establishment of a planning and funding body for the whole of higher education in Scotland." (13)

Thirdly, the Departmental files show that at least two principals had engaged in informal discussion with senior Departmental officers concerning transbinary initiatives. (14) The fact that the SED was in receipt of documentation on transbinary developments from their opposite numbers in the DES confirms that they were already preparing the ground for such new initiatives, and it was in that context that SED encouraged higher education institutions in the west of Scotland to emulate the pattern of collaboration that had been developed through PESTS, the regular meetings of the principals in the east of Scotland, in Edinburgh.

Fourthly, there is evidence that some of the option papers were deliberately construed to facilitate the outcome the Department sought. That was most clearly seen with regard to the options paper on the future of the colleges of education. The greatest care was taken in the development of that paper; it underwent several drafts and was clearly seen as a way of counteracting any inconvenient line adopted by Bone in the paper he had agreed to develop for the Council at the same time and on the same theme. While apparently being concerned to raise a number of issues for consideration by the Council, it was evident that the issues raised and the actual wording were both intended to "serve our purpose", (15) in the sense of effecting an outcome that would be in line with Departmental policy. The same memorandum continues: "It is surely reasonable to expect advice to be offered to the Secretary of State on the principles underlying the distribution of centres of teacher training as well as their institutional context. For example, it would surely be helpful to us if STEAC cast doubts upon the kind of regional consideration which ostensibly 'saved' Craigie College at the last review." Thus, questions were raised about the ideal geographical radius for a college, with the suggestion being that that be increased from fifty miles to a hundred miles. Furthermore, questions were put which focused attention on the limited range of studies undertaken at Dunfermline College and at Craigie, in line with the Department's view that some

educational reasons had to be adduced for closure and the narrowness of the academic base of institutions was thought to constitute such grounds. What is more, there is also evidence that the SED's advice was heeded. In his statement to the House of Commons on 17 July 1986 Malcolm Rifkind intimated that "the educational arguments which were put to me and which I have accepted point overwhelmingly to Dunfermline being the site for physical education". (16) That remark could only have been made on the authoritative advice of HMI. However, that professional advice was combined with the political advice which ensured that Dunfermline College would not continue as a specialist institution but would be set in the wider range of studies covered by Moray House.

Finally, Wilson performed more than the role of assessor on the Council. It became his regular practice to summarise discussion at appropriate points, usually at the end of a debate on a major issue, such as the size of the college of education sector or the retention of a three-part structure for higher education. These summarising statements are impressive. The care with which the minutes were prepared and discussed within the SED suggests that the SED was determined to ensure that these summaries clearly reflected Departmental policy.

These various sources of evidence suggest that, while STEAC was intended to be an open, consultative process, the SED exerted a strongly controlling influence. Insofar as it did, it confirms previous findings on the key role of the SED in regard to the policy community and the policy-making process.

An even more hostile interpretation of the SED's role in STEAC suggests itself. On this view, the SED, having emerged from the pressures imposed by the Munn and Dunning Development Programme on assessment and curriculum in the secondary school and a most damaging teachers' strike, was able to address the issues in higher education which, by any standards, called for action. The SED was

committed to maintaining the control it currently exercised over central institutions and colleges of education; it acknowledged the need, in the light of the Public Accounts Committee report and other evidence, to address the problem of over-capacity in the colleges of education; and it nurtured the desire to extend its involvement in higher education. Faced with these difficulties and prospects, so the argument might run, the SED successfully engineered the establishment of a national council and sponsored a massive consultation exercise, whose outcome was to reinforce its controlling powers in Scottish education. Whether or not that interpretation of the SED's role is valid, the analysis of the STEAC process confirms the conclusion of earlier research that the SED is the key player in the policy community.

However, there is a lack of complete "fit" between the concept of the policy community as it was originally developed by McPherson and Raab, and as it has been deployed by Humes and others, and the policy-making process which STEAC exemplified. There are four ways in which that absence of fit can be demonstrated and which therefore point to the need for adjustments to our understanding of how the policy community operates.

Firstly, the notion of the policy community as a single homogeneous entity, as the terms "community" and "class" imply, is an over-simplification. In the STEAC process there were three clearly identifiable policy communities reflecting the structural divisions in higher education between universities, central institutions, and colleges of education. The university community consisted of the individual universities themselves, their representative bodies such as the CVCP and the UGC; those bodies with which the universities work in close association such as the Royal Society, the Royal Society of Edinburgh, the British Academy, the Research Councils, and the various other learned societies such as the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Royal College of Surgeons and Physicians; and the

national and institutional staff and student unions. Corresponding alliances of interest are clearly identifiable for the other two sectors. Thus, the central institutions were supported by their representative bodies like COPADOI and the Council of Polytechnic Directors, by the CNAA, and by a range of professional bodies such as the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, as well as their own staff and student unions. Finally, the colleges of education were the concern of the individual colleges, the Committee of Principals, the teachers' unions, ADES, the Headteachers' Association of Scotland, COSLA, the regional councils, and their academic and student unions. At each phase of the STEAC process these communities of interest exerted themselves in vigorous advocacy. For the most part, within each of the groupings a remarkable consistency of approach was adopted, evidence, no doubt, of overlapping membership, of good lines of communication, and of the kind of networking that is possible in the relatively compact educational entity of Scotland, in which members of the academic community are able to interact intensively with each other. So obvious was that networking that some institutions were content in the making of submissions merely to add a gloss to the main document of the "parent" representative body while, for example, thanks to the ubiquitous David Semple, Director of Education for Lothian and Secretary of ADES, the submissions from Lothian, Tayside, Central, ADES and COSLA were almost identical. These instances of close collaboration are surely symptomatic of that cohesiveness of purpose which unites a number of different but related academic groupings into a policy community.

Policy communities are also social mechanisms through which individuals and groups mobilise themselves to protect their interests. The STEAC process, which was at least partly initiated by the significant reduction in student number projections and therefore the anticipated intensification of competition for students, forced institutions and their allies to defend their positions. If there was a single

policy community in Scotland prior to STEAC it was fractured by the existence of competing interests. Universities invoked the principle of quality, which, they maintained, could only be defended by continued allegiance to the UGC and continued access to the research councils; CIs invoked the principle of equality and threatened the university sector on the one hand by demanding access to equivalence of student funding, and the colleges of education on the other by maintaining that resources should be freed by integrating these expensive institutions within larger academic communities; and, for their part, the colleges of education invoked the principle of autonomy as the sure defence of the professional standards to which they were committed. The STEAC process was a sustained attempt by these three policy communities to defend their respective positions. In that connection, Humes has castigated members of the leadership class for devoting so much of their time to "self-serving activities", in the sense that "much of Scottish education is now run, not for the benefit of pupils, their parents and the community at large, but to serve the interests of those who occupy senior positions in the hierarchy". (17) Apart from the fact that that is a mere *ad hominem* argument, the various protagonists in the STEAC process might well argue that their campaign was intended not to benefit themselves directly but to secure the future well-being of the educational arrangements to which they were committed.

Whether or not the advocacy apparent in the STEAC process is dismissible as the pursuit and protection of self-interest, the existence of fundamental disagreement cannot be denied. Indeed, not only did these disagreements issue in quite bitter conflict between the policy communities, but they were also encountered within each of these communities from time to time. The debate in the Committee of Principals on college closures and the disagreement between the university principals on repatriation are examples of conflict of that kind. Perhaps it was inevitable that conflict should emerge with regard to college closures. The recommendation that the number of colleges should be reduced to four was bound

to lead to a certain degree of institutional rivalry as each of the institutions sought, without being too aggressive with regard to other institutions, to ensure that their own survival could be defended. Perhaps the most serious acrimony was generated in the debate on the future of physical education training, where a rivalry that had existed for many years between two centres of physical education erupted into bitterness of a deeply wounding kind. The existence of such conflict and disagreement provides even further confirmation that, in the STEAC process, the policy community was far from being a single homogeneous entity.

The existence of these different policy communities is so obvious that it is surprising how McPherson and Raab and their followers gave quite so much weight to the notion of a single policy community. Their major study is almost exclusively concerned with school education and the way in which other parts of the system impinge on the work of the schools. Given that focus, it is understandable that the policy community for them should consist of those in the SED and outside it whose professional work was concerned mainly with the schools. Marker, who recognises his indebtedness to the work of McPherson and Raab, was able to demonstrate the existence of a policy community for teacher education and inferred, but did not demonstrate, the existence of other policy communities. The STEAC episode, partly because it brought the universities into the discussion of higher education in Scotland for the first time, certainly demonstrates the existence and impact of three policy communities. For his part, even Humes has acknowledged, in his revisiting of the notion of the leadership class, that "the implied homogeneity of the leadership class (which was a feature of my 1986 analysis) is now questionable: it may be more accurate to speak of policy communities within Scottish education". (18) This analysis of STEAC confirms that Humes's revised interpretation is well grounded.

The second aspect of the policy community requiring revision concerns its elitist connotation. McPherson and Raab specifically refer to "the community of individuals who mattered" and the use of the term "leadership class" by Humes reinforces its elitist associations. Marker adopts the same approach, although his interviewees include union officials, such as John Pollok of the EIS and John Maxton and George Livingston of ALCES. Their combined analysis suggests that policy-making is the prerogative of a privileged few. How far does that analysis hold with regard to the STEAC process?

In the first place, it is striking how few of the leaders of the various quangos participated in the STEAC debate. The SEB, SCRE, SCET, and the CCC offered no developed views on the major issues facing STEAC, or contented themselves merely with a general statement covering their area of responsibility. The GTC made no response to the request for evidence although, on the prompting of its new Registrar, Ivor Sutherland, offered a sustained analysis of the report at the consultation phase. That degree of non-participation is further evidence of the weakness of the categorisation of the term "policy community". Once it is acknowledged that there are several policy communities, it is perfectly understandable that not all of the national agencies will participate in the analysis of every issue: they will participate in areas of direct concern to their work. SEB and CCC, for example, have no particular locus in a debate on the future of higher education, but they would be expected to participate - and they fully meet this expectation - in a public consultation exercise on other national initiatives such as the 5-14 Development Programme or Higher Still, the major review of post-16 educational provision in Scotland. Contrary, then, to perceived understanding on the policy community, what determines participation in policy-making is less status than professional expertise.

With regard to the involvement of Scotland's various quangos, the role of ADES in the STEAC process is worthy of particular note. According to McPherson and Raab, senior SED officials had considerable confidence in directors of education and, aware that they had key responsibilities for the implementation of policy, regularly consulted with them, formally and informally, on policy development. By the time of STEAC, that regard for ADES had clearly weakened. The most significant contribution made by ADES to the STEAC discussion was its campaign to ensure that consideration of the college of education issue was deferred by recommending the establishment of a joint working group from the Department and COSLA to explore alternative arrangements such as bringing teacher education under the control of the regional authorities. There is detectable here David Semple's continuing interest, evident in his CTES joint note of reservation with John Pollok, in expanding the role of education authorities into higher education provision. The fact that that view was swept aside in the ministerial decision on college closures presaged the growing marginalisation of ADES and COSLA that was to intensify towards the end of the 1980s, when Michael Forsyth introduced his radical agenda for Scottish education. However, the dismissive attitude of the government to the ADES proposal weakens the claim that the Directorate enjoyed a privileged position in policy formulation.

Secondly, as has already been noted, the involvement of teachers, lecturers and other educationists extended well beyond a limited number of high status figures in leadership positions in institutions and elsewhere. The very fact that open participation was sought at various points in the process ruled out the possibility that policy-making would be an exclusive affair and the volume of documentation generated is a cogent demonstration of the validity of the claim that the STEAC process was the largest and fullest consultation exercise ever conducted on higher education in Scotland.

That said, it would be a serious distortion to imply that the STEAC process was an entirely open and democratic one. One group - the principals of colleges and universities - were, perhaps understandably, given preferential treatment and they fully exploited the opportunities provided to exert an enormous impact on the outcome. Three of their number were members of the Council and a fourth member was a former principal. The principals dominated the discussion on the Council, even although they were in almost continuous disagreement with each other. They each submitted long and influential papers to the Council, setting out lines of development for the sector they represented and undoubtedly moved the thinking of the Council forward on such key issues as institutional relationships and the planning and funding of the system. In addition, all three principals participated in one or more of the meetings with such other groups as the UGC, the NAB and the Advisory Board of the Research Councils. Moreover, the principals were the only group invited to meet the Council to offer their "personal" views, sector by sector, and no fewer than five of the principals wrote supplementary statements to the Council (Carroll, Furness, Hills, Kirk and Leach). Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the advice of the principals had a major impact on the final decision of the Secretary of State. Malcolm Rifkind admitted that the planning and funding mechanism recommended by the Council had been rejected on the grounds that it did not enjoy the full support of the principals. The recommendation on the SIT was also rejected for the same reason. The Secretary of State made no such revealing disclosure on the college of education question, but it is bound to have weighed heavily with him that the principals as a group were in agreement "that a measure of rationalisation of the college of education system is necessary and that it would be possible on a numerical basis to accommodate the population of pre-service students in a smaller number of colleges". (19)

Does the special role accorded the principals in the STEAC exercise substantiate the thesis on the persistence of the influence of a privileged group of insiders in the

policy-making process? Was the STEAC process, for all its outward endorsement of the principle of extended participation, merely a charade while, fundamentally, policy-making remained a stitched-up job by "the community of individuals who mattered"? In responding to that line of questioning, it is clearly inadequate to make the logical point that the fact that ministers decided along the lines of the principals' advice does not prove that the principals exerted undue influence, for ministers might have been influenced by other weighty considerations. Nor would it be fair to maintain that politicians are seldom reluctant to be responsive to consultation when there is some political advantage to be gained by doing so. It is simply incontestable that the principals were allowed to exert significant influence and, if that is not to be taken as evidence of the operation of a restricted and privileged policy community, an alternative explanation is required.

It is essential to take account of the changing context in which educational leadership is exercised. There is no doubt from the accounts offered by McPherson and Raab and Marker that SED had become accustomed to consulting with college principals and directors of education on a personal basis. Rodgers' account, as a senior civil servant in the '50s and '60s, is particularly revealing in this connection. (20) Not all directors or principals were judged equally worthy of being taken into official confidence. In proffering advice, directors and principals would be under no moral or professional obligation to consult with their colleagues: they would be offering a view, on a personal and collegial basis, in the interests of the service, and the reason for their being involved in the process in that way was that they could be relied upon to provide that kind of confidential advice. By the time of STEAC, a culture of consultation and participation in the management of institutions had become well established. There is no doubt that, in responding to the invitation to submit evidence to STEAC and to comment on the Council's report itself, all principals would follow an established practice of generating through senate or academic board a document that reflected an institutional consensus.

In contributing to the STEAC process all of the principals remained loyal to the line adopted by their institution or by the body which represented the principals of the sector. There were two exceptions. Williams adopted an approach to planning and funding of higher education that differed slightly from that adopted by the University of Glasgow. He personally was associated with the STEAC position, whereas the University of Glasgow favoured a sub-committee of the UGC as the key planning and funding body. The other exception was Bone: he openly acknowledged, in his statement on the future of colleges that went to the Council, that his preferred solution of integration with the universities would not be accepted by his fellow principals and, indeed, would run counter to the prevailing view in the colleges. Apart from these two exceptions, then, both relating to those who were members of the STEAC, it could be fairly maintained that the principals reflected their institutional views in the STEAC process and it would be distorting to suggest that the privileged position afforded the principals enabled them to retreat into an elitist caucus to advocate lines of development that would be unacceptable to their colleagues. For example, the support for the monotechnic principle did not come from a small group of principals: it was widely supported by trade unions, by headteachers, and by the welter of community and other groups which campaigned vigorously for Craigie, Dunfermline College of Physical Education, and Aberdeen and Dundee Colleges. For these reasons, it is permissible to conclude that, notwithstanding the role accorded the principals during STEAC, the operation of the policy community was more democratic and less elitist than established interpretations of that model of policy-making allow.

The third area calling for adjustment to the concept of the policy community concerns the degree of collusion it implied between the SED and other groups. McPherson and Raab and Marker characterised the relationship between members of the policy community as one based on close collaboration and shared

understandings and values. The defining qualities that are associated with membership of the community are "deference and trust". Willingly or unwillingly - Humes would claim the former and attribute the power of the SED's influence to the manipulations of the patronage system - key players are manoeuvred into being active partners in the furtherance of SED policy. It is difficult to find evidence of collusion of this kind in the STEAC process. The SED files show an attempt by one principal to lobby privately with SED officials on the SIT proposals but having to leave with the assurance that "everything remains to be fought for". (21) Williams repeatedly wrote to the Secretary of State to keep him informed of initiatives being adopted by the universities to strike more collaborative postures with non-university institutions, but that correspondence has to be viewed as a form of professional courtesy rather than as an expression of subservience or compliance.

Protagonists of the policy community usually find support for their thesis in the SED's strategy for determining the membership of national committees: the one sure way of reinforcing SED policy is thought to lie in packing national committees with those who can be relied upon to deliver a report that is broadly in line with SED expectations. Compliance and the flattery of academic recognition are thought to reinforce each other in the connivance of the patronage system. The membership of the STEAC provides little support for that thesis. While some of the members undoubtedly meet the Humes criterion of membership of the leadership class, half of the members of the Council, including the Chairman, were drawn from the world of industry and commerce, strictly speaking outwith the confines of the policy community, as traditionally understood, although three of them, McCallum, Harper and Smith, had associations with HE institutions. Moreover, it would be curious to describe members such as Williams, Cuming and Bone as mere "place men", strategically positioned on the Council to ensure that the official line would be pedalled. In the first place, these three were well known to be capable of

independent judgement, people who had been publicly critical of one aspect of SED policy or another over the years. They were also people who were well regarded by their peers in each of the three sectors. If these members of the Council were supposed to be the willing dupes of the government, it is curious that they were in such robust disagreement throughout the work of the Council. Which of them was supposed to be the vehicle for the expression of the official line? Moreover, the fact that the issues raised by STEAC were contentious, to the point of generating considerable acrimony of exchange between members of the Council as well as in the wider public and professional debate, appears to rule out any possibility that the resolution of issues could be secured by collusion of any kind.

That conclusion is helpful in assessing the extent to which the STEAC process was "pluralist" or "corporatist". These terms are normally assumed to occupy extreme ends of the policy-making continuum. Pluralism implies the acknowledgement of multiple sources of authority and diversity of interests. Conflict between these interests is assumed to be inevitable and the task of government, the principal source of policy-making, is to effect a reconciliation of interests through negotiation and compromise, which leaves all parties sufficiently content to pursue the line of action dictated by the consensus. By contrast, corporatist policy-making implies the existence of sufficient shared understanding and values between government and other areas of authority to enable such differences as do emerge to be resolved, either through acquiescence or patronage. Consensus, far from being the outcome of negotiation, as it is under pluralist approaches, is the defining feature of political relationships in corporatist systems. It is not difficult to see why commentators such as McPherson and Raab and Marker characterise the operation of the policy-community as corporatist. And Humes reserves his most scathing criticisms for those who acquiesce in such policy-making arrangements.

The STEAC process provides no support for associating the policy community with corporatist approaches. On the contrary, the process provides a striking illustration of pluralism. Different centres of authority are apparent and are given formal recognition through membership of the Council; these centres of authority turn out to consist of strong alliances that are committed to protecting their interests; the existence of conflict is fully acknowledged and the central task is seen as effecting a reconciliation of these interests in order to allow political action to proceed. That search for consensus through compromise is identifiable at different stages throughout the STEAC process. It is manifest in the attempt within the Council to secure agreement on institutional relationships, and the outcome in that case was to endorse the status quo, notwithstanding the existence of powerful arguments which maintained that the status quo was unsatisfactory. It was evident again in the Council's work in the desperate eleventh-hour attempts by the Chairman to force a compromise on the establishment of national machinery on the planning and funding of higher education by making three important concessions to the universities. Had these concessions not been accepted, there would undoubtedly have followed a note of reservation by Williams. And it was demonstrated most convincingly of all in the wide range of interests Malcolm Rifkind had to reconcile as Secretary of State in the final decision on the college of education system. The pressures impacting on the Secretary of State on that issue were as follows:

- (a) to reduce the number of colleges, in line with the committee's recommendations;
- (b) to dispose of surplus space, in line with the report from the Public Accounts Committee;
- (c) to retain the existing geographical spread of colleges to facilitate access to in-service and support for schools;

- (d) -to rationalise physical education training in line with the EC directive on equal opportunities;
- (e) to establish a single centre for PE training in view of the low intake required;
- (f) to take account of the substantial lobby supporting Craigie and Dunfermline colleges;
- (g) to respect the political pressures deriving from the fact that two "vulnerable" colleges were in the constituencies of his immediate predecessor in office, George Younger, and of his parliamentary private secretary, Lord James Douglas-Hamilton; and
- (h) to take the radical option of encompassing the colleges of education within universities and passing the problem to the Minister for Education and Science.

The minister's decision represented a politically astute solution. The number of colleges would be reduced from seven to five, but all seven sites would remain open; physical education would be concentrated on the Cramond campus, while Dunfermline College of PE would be merged with Moray House. Those who campaigned for the college system could feel that their campaigns had been successful; the Public Accounts Committee could note that two colleges had been closed; George Younger and Lord James Douglas-Hamilton could face their constituents with honour; at the same time Malcolm Rifkind left his options open for the future, for he indicated that, unless colleges were able to dispose of surplus space, "closures would be inevitable" (22); and finally, while the monotechnic

principle had been endorsed, Malcolm Rifkind informed the House of Commons that an alternative solution might still be adopted "if circumstances appeared to warrant it". (23) The political astuteness of the solution derives mainly from its reconciliation of a range of competing interests in a way that secured a wide consensus. There could be no better illustration of the way in which policy communities can operate on pluralistic lines.

The final refinement to the policy community thesis involves the relationship between the policy community and government decision-making. Humes has claimed that the operation of the policy community is most obvious in the context in which "the input from politicians was erratic and ineffective". (24) The relative transparency of the STEAC process enables the role of politicians to be gauged with some accuracy. The extended policy community had participated throughout that process and the Council sought to reflect the consensus in its recommendations. The recommendation on the colleges of education stimulated a torrent of opposition. Supporters of the colleges thought to be at risk inundated their members of parliament with representations of various kinds and the Secretary of State, in turn, received strong representations from his political colleagues. Despite that, the advice from the Scottish Office was clearly in favour of a reduction in the number of institutions and the integration of the two separate centres for physical education. Pressurised by other factors - the need to appease the political interests committed to "saving" some of the colleges - Malcolm Rifkind went for the "no-closure" option, while still reducing the number of colleges from seven to five. It is significant that that decision was taken even although the Secretary of State himself favoured incorporation of the colleges within universities. The fact that Malcolm Rifkind decided on a line of action that he considered to be less than ideal does not show that politicians are subservient to official advice or to the public will as expressed through the consultation process. It demonstrates that a politician has to reconcile a number of pressures: on the college issue, the ministerial preference for

incorporation with universities simply could not be seriously considered as long as the universities were the responsibility of the DES. Moreover, the fact that the SIT recommendation was rejected does not weaken the claim that ministerial judgement has precedence over the wishes of the policy community. Malcolm Rifkind gave as his reason for rejecting the SIT recommendation that there was "a sharp division of opinion" amongst the CIs. However, it is arguable that his primary reason for rejecting that option was that, in his view, the problems facing higher education in Scotland were not to be solved by the creation of a number of new universities. (25)

Finally, the decision to resile from repatriation, even when the three conditions had been met, was a ministerial one. STEAC had recommended repatriation; the educational community outside the universities had supported that thesis; and a significant minority within the university community favoured it, provided the conditions could be met. SED satisfied itself that the conditions could be met and, as has been noted, gave a strong recommendation to ministers to that effect. Notwithstanding the strength of the support for that key change, Malcolm Rifkind took his own counsel, even although he knew that members of STEAC would be disappointed at his decision, (26) and adopted a strategy that was well short of the ideal, and one that McCallum regarded as "a second-best solution", although "with a good Scottish committee it can be a very good second-best". (27) In all of these ways, the policy community, which has been shown to be influential, is still, nevertheless, subservient to the authority of government.

To recapitulate, then, the STEAC process provides confirmation of the leading role played by SED in policy-making. However, it suggests also that adjustments are required to our understanding of the operation of the policy community: it is maintained that, contrary to established views, there is more than one policy community and that it is inaccurate to envisage that community as a single

homogeneous entity; that the policy community need not be elitist and can accommodate extensive participation in policy-making; that there need not be collusion between the policy community and the Scottish Office, for that might stand in the way of the key adjudicating role required of the Scottish office in a pluralist context; and, finally, the policy community, while clearly exerting considerable influence on the policy-making process, is ultimately subservient to the authority of ministers.

Defenders of the established view of the policy community have, of course, two rejoinders. First, it could be maintained that the policy community has less relevance in policy determination when recourse is had to the device of the national committee followed by public consultation. Indeed, in these contexts, it might be argued that the policy community's influence is deliberately undermined or set aside. Secondly, it might be argued that the policy community may at one time have been an extremely influential agent in policy-making but that, with changed political times and greater openness of government, the policy community does not play quite the role it played in the past. However, these are both significant concessions and support the reinterpretation of the operation of the policy community which the present study offers.

STEAC and "Rationalism", "Incrementalism" and "Prudentialism"

If the STEAC process calls for adjustments to our understanding of the operation of the policy community, it provides a striking exemplification and endorsement of the thesis that policy-making is an incremental process. Contrary to the rationalists, who envisage policy-making as a dispassionate analysis of options to identify the logically preferred line of action that will realise a socially worthwhile objective, incrementalists characterise the process as an untidy and hesitant series of compromises, effecting only minimal adjustments to the status quo. The STEAC process is easily interpretable in these terms. However, the analysis now offered

will suggest that incrementalism does not fully capture the essence of the STEAC process. A modified version of incrementalism, for which the term "prudentialism" is proposed, will therefore be advanced. Prudentialism has four main features, all of them encapsulated in the STEAC process.

The first of these is the kind of pragmatism in which political considerations outweigh the requirement for logical consistency and rational argument. That is, prudentialism, like incrementalism, characterises the policy-making process as a somewhat messy attempt at the reconciliation of conflicting pressures in the search for what is politically acceptable rather than a dispassionate and clinically logical endeavour. It is true that the STEAC process has many outward signs of being a rationally planned undertaking. The notion of a public enquiry has a certain rational appeal: it entails periodic stock-taking in an area of public policy; the careful selection of a committee of enquiry; the submission of evidence; its distillation into recommendations that are themselves the focus of further public scrutiny and debate before issuing in parliamentary action. These are all features of policy-making that the rationalist would applaud. The same may be said of the practice on the Council of carefully and painstakingly identifying long lists of options and their evaluation against a common set of criteria, as occurred, for example, with regard to forms of institutional relationships and the national machinery for planning and funding of higher education in Scotland. However, STEAC was far from being an exercise in rational planning: it represented the SED's second attempt to tackle the same problem; it exemplified a government department under severe pressure in attempting to respond to, rather than to control, events - the merger proposal from the University of Aberdeen, the review of higher education that had been initiated in England which threatened to isolate the Scottish universities, the report of the Public Accounts Committee, the Treasury's demand for efficiency in the management of the colleges of education, the government's Green Paper on higher education, and the review of the UGC. Far from exemplifying the objective

appraisal of how a rationally ordered system of higher education might be established, STEAC displayed a government that appeared to be at the mercy of events.

Political pragmatism manifested itself in several aspects of the STEAC process. It was evident in the various options appraisals attempted by the Council. The options appraisal technique, as adopted by the Treasury and presumably obligatory in all government departments, is a reasonable way of testing the validity of a proposed policy. (28) It involves the identification of all plausible lines of action and their analysis against a common set of demanding criteria. The criteria used to evaluate the five options for the future organisation of higher education in Scotland were as follows:

- "1. there should continue to be a sector distinct from the university sector, with essentially the same aims and functions as the present public sector;
2. any reorganisation must seek to preserve and enhance quality of education and training;
3. any organisation should facilitate future rationalisation;
4. the establishment of any new organisation should not require additional resources;
5. teacher training should continue to be taught in specialist colleges." (29)

From the logical point of view, these criteria are unimpressive: two of them - numbers 1 and 5 - are entirely inappropriate since they both assume the validity of the very institutional arrangements that STEAC was established to review. Since

the STEAC terms of reference included "the general principles which should govern relationships between universities and other institutions", it cannot be right to accept as given the existence of a separate public sector or that teacher education institutions should continue in separate establishments. For its part, criterion 3 is worded at such a high level of generality that it could be shown to apply to any option. Finally, it is difficult to justify a criterion that rules out additional expenditure: a cost-benefit analysis might demonstrate that additional benefits might accrue that would fully justify the additional expenditure. It seems short-sighted to rule out that possibility, especially when another of the criteria is concerned with the maintenance and enhancement of quality.

As if it were not enough to posit inadequate evaluative criteria, the application of these criteria to the five options listed was extremely lax. Thus, for example, the reasons for rejecting the first option - the union of public sector institutions with neighbouring universities - included the unjustified claim that "it would threaten the existence of a distinctive vocation-oriented sector of higher education"; that it would introduce "an increasing academic overlay in teacher training"; and that "it is questionable" whether the option would "facilitate the most effective use of scarce resources". (30) No attempt was made to justify these vague and highly questionable claims. Even more feeble claims were made in connection with the rejection of the second option of "regional public sector federations". In opposition to that development, it was maintained that "the need to secure adequate representation of the very different college specialisms in the management arrangements would make agreement on priorities for resource allocation difficult to achieve in practice", (31) as if resource allocation, especially during times of fiscal stringency, could be anything other than extremely difficult. Again, there is a strange illogicality in rejecting the option of "functional public sector federations", partly on the grounds that it will weaken the autonomy of individual institutions and then, subsequently, recommending the establishment of the SIT, which would be a

form of functional federation in which institutional autonomy would be significantly curtailed. Finally, throughout the analysis, too much weight had to be borne by the assumption that universities are not responsive to industrial needs. The evaluation of option 1 turned on the allegation that it is doubtful whether "the responsiveness of the higher education system to employers' requirements and individual industrial needs would be enhanced". (32) The federal university option - despite Cuming's repeated assurances that vocational commitments would be upheld in the charter of the new university - was rejected on the grounds that it "could encourage a drift away from the vocationally-oriented courses, which are the great strength of public sector education". (33) That whole line of argument ignores the crucially important role that universities play in serving the needs of industry and the professions.

These illogicalities and inconsistencies are not to be interpreted as lapses on the part of the distinguished academics and others on the Council: they reflect the inevitable concessions that are required in reconciling the conflicting interests that were represented on the Council and the strong desire to generate a report that would carry support in the educational and wider community. To achieve that compromise, members of the Council acknowledged the need to reflect the views submitted by a range of extremely well organised and vociferous pressure groups. To that extent, the work of the Council demonstrated the propensity of policy-makers to alight on a conclusion, not because of the force of the argument on which it rests, but because of the degree of support it is assumed to command.

The same tendency is evident at different stages of the STEAC process. The establishment of STEAC provided a stimulus to sustained public squabbling between the competing sectors in higher education. The process was marked less by rationality than by advocacy: protagonists of the various sectors and their allies embarked on a mission of self-defence; they interpreted the invitation to participate as an opportunity to protect their place in the sun, even if, at times, that required

them to be dismissive of their competitors. In that sustained exercise of advocacy, the most extraordinary claims were made that were open to the most straightforward refutation: colleges of education defended their independent position with great stridency on the grounds that integration with a university could lead to a reduction in the resources allocated to them and to a significant weakening in the professional orientation of their work and their links with the schools. A glance at experience in England or in some overseas countries, where teacher education is a university activity, would have allowed such claims to be tested. For their part, universities united in defending the prevailing mode of allocating research funds on the grounds that research was their primary responsibility, whereas for other institutions it was subservient to teaching. Nowhere in all of the university evidence was there a convincing distinction drawn between the functions of a university and those of central institutions. Repeated reference was made to vocational education and serving the needs of industry and commerce but, in logic, these functions can be ascribed equally to the universities and to central institutions. And yet, the STEAC report was persuaded by such claims and gave them its full endorsement. It was persuaded, not by the logic of the case, for, in truth, logic does not support such claims, but by the strength of the community of conviction demonstrated by the protagonists in the debate.

The same process is evident at the point of ministerial decision. The Secretary of State rejected the SIT proposal, not because of any weakness in the concept of a SIT, but because it had not achieved sufficient support even amongst those who would be its constituent members. There may have been a reasonable case for a SIT - and Cuming's paper on the University of Scotland was an impressive piece of analysis - but it could not muster support. The same applies to the decision on the planning and funding of higher education. The SED and the minister were aware that the three conditions stipulated by the universities had been met. The case for

repatriating universities was therefore sound. The minister rejected it because there appeared to be insufficient support for it amongst the university principals.

A final example of the way in which advocacy was exalted above rational analysis during STEAC concerned the explosion of opposition against the proposed college closures. There was a strong case for reducing the over-capacity in the system. What led to the adoption of the no-closure option was the strength of the support for the seven-college system and that support was obviously orchestrated with very considerable care. For example, the wording of many of the submissions made to the Secretary of State in support of Craigie was identical. It appears to have been simply assumed that Craigie's case would be strengthened the more frequently it was reiterated and the more expressions of opposition reached the Secretary of State's desk. The STEAC process therefore illustrated the strength of direct political pressure as well as the powerful need to enjoy the popularity which comes from reflecting the consensus. One commentator has claimed that "the consensual approach to change within the Scottish educational establishment tends to avoid major issues". (34) Whether or not that concern to capture the consensus is distinctively Scottish, it is fair to conclude that the principal actors in the STEAC process were driven by pragmatic considerations. Their primary concern was to evolve a workable and acceptable strategy for higher education in Scotland, rather than to generate a logically incontrovertible thesis. That is a striking feature of prudentialism.

The second feature of prudentialism, again apparent in the STEAC process, was the absence of strategic vision. STEAC was established "to consider and report on the future strategy for higher education in Scotland". That was an invitation to offer an analysis of the role of higher education in the years ahead. That vision could then have informed the Council's thinking on the complex organisational and institutional issues that came to dominate its work. An appropriate comparison can

be made with the latest public analysis of higher education in Scotland, the Garrick Report, (35) which formed part of the National Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education, chaired by Sir Ron Dearing. The Garrick report devotes two early chapters to the "Future of Scottish Higher Education" and "The Core Business of Higher Education". These chapters expatiate on the distinctiveness of higher education; how it reflects Scottish culture; the extension of educational opportunities; teaching quality and standards; research and scholarship; and the relationship between higher education and the Scottish economy. All of the report's recommendations are envisaged as ways of ensuring "that we can realise our vision of a high quality Scottish higher education system comprising a diversity of institutions with clearly differentiated missions, which operate within a coherent, well understood framework of qualifications and national standards, and which are able to respond creatively and confidently to the needs of the next century". (36) That aspiration does not constitute mere rhetoric: the Garrick Report provides an affirmation of the values that should underpin a system of higher education; these values then provide the basis for a critique of the existing arrangements and point to a series of recommendations which will create still further enhanced educational provision.

By contrast, STEAC devotes little attention to the articulation of underpinning values. It does list, on a single page foreword to the report, nine "distinctive features" which are judged to be "part of Scotland's educational tradition". However, there is no elaboration of these features, no attempt to articulate the source of their distinctiveness or their implications for the work of the Council. It is acknowledged that the years ahead will bring "problems and challenges", but simply asserted that "the response to them should derive from, and be appropriate to, the Scottish system". (37) There is no sense of an educational tradition as something which grows and changes but, rather, at the outset, the report merely affirms those features of the existing system from which it will be extremely

difficult to depart. In the absence of any strategic vision, and influenced, no doubt, by the prominence in the terms of reference of arrangements for providing financial support, relationships between institutions and collaboration with such bodies as the UGC, the STEAC report is soon preoccupied with the nuts and bolts of higher education rather than its strategic direction.

That almost studied neglect of purpose is surprising, given the obligation to be concerned with strategy, and given also the calibre of the educationists assembled on the Council. It is equally surprising that the absence of an articulated mission for Scottish higher education did not attract much critical comment. The editor of *The Times Higher Education Supplement* enthusiastically welcomed STEAC's vision, (38) but that judgement was reached by comparing the STEAC report with the even more dismally pedestrian Green Paper on higher education from the DES. (39) There was at least one institution that berated STEAC for missing the opportunity to undertake the radical appraisal its terms of reference implied. Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology castigated the report for failing to undertake a fundamental analysis of how higher education might be provided in a technological society. (40) The RGIT assessment is more valid than that provided by the leader writer of *The Times Higher Education Supplement*.

STEAC was not alone in lacking a vision of the future. The Scottish Office files and the papers officers prepared for the Council were equally defective, concerned as they were with the machinery of higher education other than its central preoccupations and values. For their part, ministers were even less forthcoming: for the Secretary of State, the issues on which he had to decide - the contraction of the colleges, the SIT, and the national machinery for planning and funding higher education - could be addressed without reference to fundamental purpose. They became for Malcolm Rifkind opportunities for the display of political survival skills rather than the display of leadership in the sense of winning support for a new and

better educational order. Since at no point in the process was consideration given to such a radical reordering of higher education, it was perhaps inevitable that the process became a matter of institutional adjustment within a framework of established assumptions and policies.

The third feature of prudentialism is its conservatism. An approach to policy-making which, as has been shown, is distrustful of mission statements incorporating a strategic vision is unlikely to issue in radical change. That disinclination to contemplate significant departures from established practice is reflected in a concern to protect the status quo, often on extremely shaky grounds, to contemplate only minor adjustments to existing arrangements, and to be distrustful, again without adducing robust arguments, of new initiatives. That cluster of attitudes, which epitomises conservatism in policy-making, has been long associated with the civil service. It was strikingly captured in Marker's interview of Angus Mitchell, who was a former Secretary of the SED. Marker reminded Mitchell of his own internal submission on the CTES report as "a cautious but definite response. . . . Although open to criticism, it avoids accusations of inaction but stops short of radical moves of the sort likely to provoke a confrontation with the local authorities. It also leaves options open for the future." Mitchell then went on:

"I suppose one could regard it as a strength or a weakness, or just a habit, of officials to be fairly cautious on the whole. One knows that, whatever you do, you will be criticised by somebody or other inevitably. . . . It is our job to warn ministers that there will be difficulties. Otherwise, I think you are not doing your job. You may recommend something, but I think you have always got to point out the drawbacks. It's very rarely that something is all good." (41)

The same cautiousness and fear of change is reflected in contributions by Mitchell's colleagues to the STEAC process. Even before the Council had been formed, and when the Department was clearly concerned to generate transbinary discussions, a senior member of the Department recorded his reaction to a meeting in August 1983 with the principal of a higher education institution as follows: "It seemed to me that there was a growing need . . . to begin a dialogue at the local level between the university and the public sector institutions about the shared use of resources and future planning, although I was not certain whether formal machinery should be set up or who should take the first step." (42) Then, at its very first meeting, Wilson invited the Council to be radical but was careful to say that the status quo remained an option. Furthermore, at the key meeting on 6 September, which Wilson was unable to attend, his depute was vehement in insisting on the need to avoid radical change "for its own sake":

"Ministers would wish to be assured that they were on very firm ground if they were to embark on changes from the status quo and any recommendations for such change should be backed by clear and convincing arguments." (43)

That syndrome of qualities that has been called incrementalism - caution, tentativeness, respectfulness for the status quo, one-step-at-a-time development - are to be found at every stage of the STEAC process. Indeed, the very establishment of STEAC, while interpretable as the bold determination of a government to come to terms with serious difficulties, could also be seen as deliberately kicking the ball into the long grass and as a convenient way of deferring consideration of the issues indefinitely. It took the Secretary of State twenty-two months to respond to the CTES report. The major recommendation - the establishment of a Council to oversee all of "advanced" provision outwith the

universities - was rejected in favour of the establishment of yet another Council "to advise on non-university higher education". It took a further year for the new body to be established and, even then, the terms of reference were changed to include "the general principles that should govern relationships between universities and other institutions". There is scarcely evidence here of the smack of firm government; rather, there is evidence of procrastinating indecisiveness of the kind that so infuriated the Public Accounts Committee. For James Scott, however, remarkable progress was being made: he could stress that some action had been taken but more decisive action had to await the findings of yet another national commission. At one point, a senior civil servant vigorously defended inaction on the college system because the STEAC report had, with its preoccupation with higher education as a whole, ruled out any decisive action with regard to one of the sectors. (44) Finally, an internal memorandum of January 1986, commenting on the preferred option with regard to physical education, states:

"It seems possible that, in the end of the day, option C would represent an attractive means of securing a reduction in the number of separate colleges as recommended in the STEAC report while, at the same time, moving towards greater cost-effectiveness as urged by the PAC. Although it is most unlikely that the Treasury would regard this, by itself, as going far enough by way of rationalisation of the college of education system, it might at least serve to hold the line for the time being." (45)

The impression created is that the government's accountability is not to act but to demonstrate that the relevant discussions are in process as a necessary prelude to action in the indefinite future.

The deliberations of STEAC exhibit a remarkably exaggerated respect for the status quo. As has been noted, the foreword to the report merely provided a statement of what were taken to be distinctive features of Scottish education, with no attempt at justification. The documentation generated by SED to accompany the invitation to submit evidence was not merely a factual account of education in Scotland: it sought to commend a carefully differentiated system. It is true that, as Wilson repeatedly urged, Scotland did not have a "binary system" in the English sense of two sectors that practically duplicated each other's provision, because SED had set its face against the territorial aggrandisement of the CIs. However, that documentation, like the debates in the Council and the subsequent discussion, failed to provide an adequate differentiation between universities and central institutions. Several attempts at a distinction were made: that universities had a primary responsibility for research, while, for central institutions, research was secondary and intended merely to support teaching; that universities undertook basic research, while the central institutions were restricted to applied research; that universities were educational institutions, while central institutions were strictly vocational; that universities were relatively insensitive to the needs of industry, while the CIs were geared to the needs of a technological society. However, all of these attempts to differentiate were merely rationalisations of the status quo, intended to mark a distinction where none existed. Throughout the whole process there was no serious attempt to address the claims that were repeatedly made by Cuming and no carefully elaborated justification was made of the differences between the two types of institution. It is easy to see why these attempts should fail, for if there genuinely was no fundamental distinction then there would be no case for continuing separate management and separate funding arrangements. In that event, given the power of the universities, it is probable that the central institutions might have been required to operate under the aegis of the UGC or its successor body. Since that represented a threat to SED's control over the CIs the status quo had to be defended at all costs.

However, the validity of the status quo was not seriously tested in the STEAC process. It had to feature as an option, as in all good option appraisals, but the criteria used to evaluate the options included features of the status quo such as the need to maintain separate CI and CE sectors. The status quo could not be rigorously interrogated if two of its principal features had to be accepted as given. It is true that the status quo emerged from the appraisal as the preferred option, but the grounds for rejecting most of the other options were extremely unconvincing. To claim, for example, that the University of Scotland option should be rejected on the grounds that "such an institution would exceed the optimal size for efficient management" places an obligation to adduce evidence to that effect and at least to consider experience elsewhere, for example, in California, where institutions many times the size of even the largest possible public sector federation in Scotland are known to flourish. The Council was in a position to make precisely that kind of comparison for it received a personal submission from Turmeau of Napier in which he reported on a recent visit to California and adumbrated the advantages, as he saw them, of a strong "state" sector running parallel to the independent sector. Moreover, to reject the University of Scotland option on the grounds that "there could be a risk of a drift away from the vocational nature of the public sector" (46) is further evidence of superficial analysis, relying, as it does, on the assumption that the universities do not profess vocational education. Further, to reject the linking of central institutions and colleges of education with neighbouring universities on the grounds that "it would threaten the existence of a distinctive vocationally-oriented sector of higher education" (47) is logically similar to rejecting option A for no other reason than it is option A. It is equally weak to posit as a ground for rejecting regional federations that "there is no guarantee that the needs of employers and of students would be better served than under the existing system". (48) However, as has been argued above, STEAC was not concerned with the development of a logically water-tight case: it was primarily concerned to generate a solution that was broadly acceptable and there was overwhelming

support in the evidence for maintaining the existing pattern of higher education provision in Scotland.

Further evidence of the tendency not to subject the status quo to too rigorous an examination is evidenced in the discussion on the relationship between colleges of education and universities. The SED's reasons for refusing to contemplate some measure of institutional amalgamation were extremely flimsy. Members of STEAC must have been well aware that, in other parts of the world, even in England, teacher education was formally integrated into university provision. In the STEAC discussions the reasons adduced by the SED assessors for rejecting that integration in Scotland were unconvincing: they were concerned about a possible increase in costs that would derive from higher salaries, despite the fact that salary differentials between colleges and universities were negligible, the habit of "leap-frogging" in the annual pay review having, even by that time, become well established; they objected to the possibility of academic drift, despite the fact that the Secretary of State had the authority to approve teacher education courses and would therefore be in a position to prevent any weakening of the practical dimension in teacher education, assuming that it would constitute a weakness if the conceptual underpinnings of teacher education were to be strengthened; and they were concerned that, if colleges were merged with universities, the real advantages of merger would not become apparent because the institutions would continue on their separate campuses, thus failing to acknowledge - what subsequent mergers have demonstrated - that integration of various kinds is achievable even when different parts of the same institution occupy separate campuses.

Perhaps the most striking illustration of the Council's reluctance to address alternatives to the status quo in a reasonably rigorous way is its response to the proposals for Scotland's three agricultural colleges. STEAC was made aware that it was proposed to unite these under a single governing body. That is, it was decided

to create a "functional federation", an option which the STEAC had rejected for other higher education institutions. Aware that that proposal for the colleges of agriculture was inconsistent with STEAC's thinking, attempts were made to reassure STEAC that the college of agriculture model was inapplicable to STEAC for two reasons. First, the colleges of agriculture were largely research rather than largely teaching institutions, and secondly, the proposal came from the institutions themselves. (49) These were clearly inadequate grounds for ruling out the possibility of applying the federal principle to other areas of higher education. The fact that they were invoked at all demonstrates the strength of the determination to retain the status quo and that determination was not to be weakened by the knowledge that, in another department of the Scottish Office, an option that had been rejected by STEAC and by SED had found favour.

Finally, the exaggerated respect for the status quo is reflected in the final ministerial decisions. The SIT and the single planning and funding mechanism were both rejected, partly because they were not supported by the principals concerned. That reason for rejecting change is further evidence of the need to avoid confrontation rather than to initiate what makes educational and institutional sense. However, in each case, Malcolm Rifkind gave a further reason for his decision. With regard to the SIT it was his view that it had to be rejected because college principals were insisting that it should have university status and the Secretary of State did not believe that the creation of new universities was the solution to the organisation of higher education in Scotland. No justification was provided for that judgement and no analysis was offered of precisely how the increase in the number of universities would weaken higher education: the existing categorisation of institutions was held to be sacrosanct. The reason for rejecting the single planning and funding mechanism for higher education is more baffling. By then, the minister was aware, as was the SED, that the conditions stipulated by STEAC could be met. For all that, Malcolm Rifkind's reasons for rejecting that change was that Scotland's

universities must continue to be members of the United Kingdom academic and international community. From a logical point of view, the conditions stipulated by STEAC could be met. However, the Secretary of State for Scotland had an over-riding commitment, in line with his collective responsibility as a member of the Cabinet, to take a decision which strengthened Scotland's role within the United Kingdom. Consequently, any initiative that might appear to weaken the union, had to be avoided, however attractive it might be on logical grounds.

Taken as a whole, considering the extent of the consultative process and the degree of involvement of members of the educational and the wider community, STEAC issued in remarkably little change. All the debate and disagreement resulted in two relatively minor changes: physical education was discontinued at Jordanhill, an outcome which caused Bone to remark that since nothing else in the teacher education system was changing the Secretary of State might have left physical education at Jordanhill alone, (50) and a Scottish committee of the University Funding Council was established to overview higher education provision in Scotland as a whole. As a result, Scotland's incoherent system of higher education was maintained; the inequalities of funding were, if anything, reinforced; not even teacher education was clearly differentiated on an institutional basis since the Council had resiled from making a definitive recommendation on teacher education at the University of Stirling. In consequence, an outcome of the STEAC was that the colleges of education were left as weak and vulnerable institutions. Besides, the existing funding arrangements against which the CI representatives had campaigned were left unattended. That such serious weaknesses were left unresolved, in a process that delivered such minimal change, is a remarkable demonstration of the prudentialist approach to policy-making.

The final feature of prudentialism to be considered, following directly from its preference for minimal incremental change, is its indecisiveness, its reluctance to

press for the final determination of a line of action in favour of keeping all options open. This was another of the features of civil service philosophy revealed in Angus Mitchell's interview with Marker and it is relatively easy to see how that accords with such other features of civil service life as caution, the avoidance of confrontation, and the need to convey the impression that the wheels of government continue to run smoothly. Given that syndrome, the most inconvenient outcome must be for a minister to announce that a previously intimated line of action was an error; there must always be scope for recovery and for reassuring parliament and the public that all is in good order, and, of course, if the wise conduct of public affairs involves proceeding one step at a time, the likelihood of crisis is minimised, modulations of policy facilitated, and positions become eternally retrievable.

STEAC provides vivid examples of that approach to policy-making. Its classic manifestation is found in the events immediately preceding the establishment of STEAC. After nearly two years' contemplation of a recommendation by the CTES report, the decision was taken to establish another body with terms of reference similar to those of CTES. What better way of keeping options open than to defer a decision by passing the same matter to another committee, thus displaying, at the same time, the capacity for decisiveness without actually making a decision of substance? That strategy of passing an issue from one committee to another is the surest way of keeping all options open, for the pressure to deliver can always be relieved by insisting, in a perfectly reasonable way, on the need to await the outcome of the next committee. The SED clearly erred in deciding, after its lengthy silence on CTES, that the new Council would deal with "non-university tertiary education", only to decide a year later that universities would, after all, fall within the remit of the STEAC. However, that change could be attributed to the unexpected merger proposal from McNicol of the University of Aberdeen and the surely less unexpected decision of DES to conduct a major review of higher

education, apparently without considering the implications of such an initiative for the Scottish Office and, indeed, for the Scottish universities.

The handling of teacher education in the STEAC process provides further evidence of the same delaying strategy. The NAO and the PAC reports did not reflect well on the SED's management of the colleges, and there was enormous pressure to address the issue of over-capacity. The recommendation to reduce to four colleges - on the face of it, an uncharacteristically precise figure, especially in the absence of evidence to justify it - showed how successful SED had been in persuading the STEAC, again without definitively supporting evidence, of the need for a major change. At the same time, the Department was aware of the need for a dispersed system of colleges to facilitate access to in-service opportunities, and James Scott vigorously defended that approach in his cross-examination by the Public Accounts Committee.

The clamour that greeted the STEAC recommendation demonstrated the powerful extent of support for dispersal and the status quo. The ministerial response to STEAC and to the consultation was to make a series of non-decisions. In the first place, the number of colleges would be formally reduced but, to the astonishment of everyone, all seven centres would remain open. That the intention was to avoid having to make an unpopular decision and to keep all options open was made explicit in Malcolm Rifkind's statement that he would review the position in a year and, if colleges did not reduce their surplus accommodation, "closure would become inevitable". The ultimate number of colleges was not the only matter that was left open. In his statement to the House of Commons, Malcolm Rifkind indicated that he had accepted the argument for specialist colleges of education but would be willing to consider alternative arrangements "if circumstances appear to warrant it". When pressed, he indicated that he had not entirely ruled out the solution which he, personally, appeared to prefer, the integration of the colleges

within the universities. Finally, the anomaly in the teacher education system - the Education Department of the University of Stirling - was tackled again in an inconclusive way. The existence of teacher education at the University of Stirling obviously was a source of concern to STEAC, especially since it had had harsh words to use about incorporating teacher education within universities. The logical outcome, if it had confidence in its own arguments, would have been to propose that the Stirling Education Department should have been closed, and that certainly would also have been a movement towards a more clearly differentiated system. However, rather than press towards a decision that might risk offence, STEAC recommended a review of the Stirling Education Department and, by so recommending, STEAC was able to pass responsibility to another body and, again, to keep all options open. The Secretary of State accepted that recommendation, thus implying that a decision had been taken when, in reality, the decision had been shelved.

Perhaps the clearest example of the SED's prudentialist approach was its need to revisit the question of the number of colleges so soon after the reduction from ten colleges to seven in 1981. The need to return to the issue after a few years strongly implies that the 1981 decision had not been based on a full appraisal of the evidence but, rather, on a desire to minimise offence and to keep political options open.

Similar non-decision-making was evident in regard to the SIT. As has been noted, this suggestion was made by the Chairman himself as a way of offering some positive support to institutions whose work had been warmly applauded by the Council and those submitting evidence but who stood to lose most in the intensifying competition with the universities for students. Even although the proposal to establish a SIT ran counter to its earlier thinking about functional federations, it won the support of the Council, though not of Cuming, who had missed the meeting on 6 September at which the idea of SIT had been introduced.

Cuming was clearly successful in securing a significant weakening in the proposal for what ultimately emerged was a recommendation, not to establish a SIT, but to undertake a feasibility study of SIT. Again, the impression is created that a weighty decision has been taken when the reverse is the case: the STEAC was successful in merely passing responsibility to another body, again in a way that closed no option. When, in due course, the Secretary of State rejected that option, the CIs were in a position in which they had gained nothing from the whole review, save a somewhat grudging entitlement to receive funding for research.

The same strategy of passing responsibility to others rather than reaching a definitive decision is manifest in the STEAC recommendation on the national planning and funding body. To make an absolutely central and radical recommendation contingent on three conditions was the inescapable compromise that had to be made to secure consensus on the Council. However, that was yet another instance of one committee passing its central problems to another for resolution, in this instance, the ABRC and the Croham Committee, which had been set up during the lifetime of STEAC to review the UGC. Again, we have an instance of a decision made to defer a decision, with the effect of keeping options open. When the Secretary of State made his final decision on the universities he again avoided a decisive and radical change: he merely created the kind of half-way house which gave him some locus in the discussion of university policy but left the way open, either to retreat to the status quo or to repatriate the Scottish universities. *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland* castigated the Secretary of State for a "timid retreat", (51) but it was fully in line with the prudentialist approach to policy-making.

To recapitulate: there is a striking discrepancy between the academic, professional and political involvement in the STEAC process and an outcome which reinforced so comprehensively a pattern of higher education provision in Scotland that was so

seriously defective in many ways. Incrementalists might argue that the explanation for that rests in the tendency for cautious, one-step-at-a-time change or, as it was called by Lindblom himself, the capacity for "muddling through". However, that provides only a partial explanation. Those who controlled the extent of reform were not simply muddling through: they were protecting themselves against criticism, permitting only that degree of change that would enable them, in due course, to adjust policy in the light of changed circumstances; they demonstrated a distrustfulness of long-term planning which might entail radical change; and they displayed what has been termed "one of the more depressing aspects of modern Scotland . . . - . . . the fear of what is new". (52) That combination of qualities, which has been termed prudentialism, provides a cogent explanation for the failure of STEAC, for failure it certainly was. Within five years, the system that STEAC bequeathed was radically transformed, not, however, out of a conviction that radical change was necessary, but because developments in England, such as the abolition of the binary system and the creation of a separate funding council, forced Scottish educationists and politicians to shape their own destiny. That severance created a context in which the problems of the teacher education system could be addressed through integration within a university system, and the inequalities of which the CIs had complained throughout the STEAC process were redressed through the adoption of a common formula-led approach to funding and the elimination of the institutional distinctions - the distinctions which STEAC condoned - in a fully integrated national system of higher education.

STEAC and the Humes "Revised" Model

Humes's analysis of the impact of Michael Forsyth on educational policy in Scotland in the late 1980s has led him to conclude that such notions as the leadership class and the policy community offer only "partial explanations" of the policy process. A fuller explanation, he suggests, is offered by his "revised" model, which consists of five "dimensions". These are: ideology, people,

structures, issues and culture. The policy process is viewed as "a complex interaction of these five dimensions". (53) In subsequent formulations the term "institutions" has replaced "structures" and that is the version of the model chosen for analysis here. (54)

Issues, the fourth dimension, provided the impetus for the STEAC. According to Humes, issues "force themselves on to the political agenda without the stimulus of political partisanship or the activities of pressure groups". (55) They emerge "because of the force of circumstances". (56) Several issues can be seen to have forced themselves on to the agenda of Scottish education in the months preceding the establishment of STEAC: the need to follow-up the unfinished business of the CTES report on the national arrangements for advanced courses outside the universities; the merger proposal from the University of Aberdeen; the dramatic reduction in student number projections; and the decision of the DES to initiate a review of higher education which, because it inevitably entailed transbinary discussion in England, left the Scottish universities in danger of being marginalised. These were issues in the sense that they posed questions about the most appropriate ordering of higher education, which the existing policy framework could not resolve.

All of these issues brought into question the adequacy of existing institutional arrangements, the third of the Humes dimensions. The issues that were unresolved by CTES concerned the most appropriate institutional context for higher education outside the universities and whether it should continue, in an unco-ordinated way, to be provided by further education establishments run by regional authorities, or by central institutions which were administered nationally by the SED. The Aberdeen merger proposal questioned the educational and financial desirability of three separate institutions in the City of Aberdeen and proposed that a merger of all three into an enlarged university would create an institutional solution that could

deliver educational and financial benefits. The student number projections, forecasting a reduction of between one-quarter and one-third in the total student population over the following fifteen years, clearly raised questions about the number and kind of institutions that would be required to accommodate a much reduced number; and the DES review was initiated to question the functions of higher education and the adequacy of a differentiated system of institutions to changing social and technological needs. It is hardly surprising that, faced with such questioning of the existing institutional arrangements, the SED gave STEAC terms of reference which focused directly on the roles and functions of higher education institutions and their interrelationships. STEAC was primarily an exercise in institutional definition and governance.

Institutions, however, were not merely the focus of discussion: they played a vigorous part in the policy-making process. That was perfectly understandable, since those working in institutions were bound to be concerned about potential changes to their professional circumstances. Indeed, in some institutions - the colleges of education - some had fears that perhaps their institutions would cease to exist. What the STEAC process demonstrated was the capacity of the different sectors in higher education and, indeed, of individual institutions in the case of the threatened colleges of education, to attract support from their professional allies and constituencies. One of the most striking features of the process was the extent to which agencies and institutions that had no apparent connection with schools and universities participated in the process. This applied particularly in regard to the colleges of education, where numerous community groups as well as individuals, acting on behalf of neighbours or families with students, made formal representations to the Secretary of State. These participants are a testimony to the capacity of institutions to attract intense loyalty.

As has been noted, there emerged three clearly defined policy communities, each of which conducted a vigorous campaign to protect its preferred institutional arrangements. These campaigns had significant impact on the deliberations of the STEAC and certainly shaped the recommendations. They also had a significant impact on the ministerial decisions, since all of the decisions taken are interpretable as direct responses to the weight of opinion emerging from the consultation process. The significance of these various groups in the STEAC process is that, while undoubtedly they did not have significant power on their own, in alliance they constituted substantial pressure groups, which had to be taken into account by the Council and by ministers.

The Humes revised model distinguishes between institutions and people, the individuals and groups who participated in the policy-making process. The principals of the colleges and universities were clearly key figures who, despite their privileged position, for the most part represented the views of their colleagues rather than their own personal preferences. However, other groups were also influential: civil servants, led by Wilson, played an important role in servicing the Council and formulating options for ministers; besides, politicians themselves played a key part in lobbying to protect individual colleges, particularly Craigie and Dunfermline; and, of course, politicians carried responsibility for the final decisions and were called to account for these decisions in parliament on 17 July 1986 on the colleges, and in April 1987 on the universities.

While it is appropriate to recognise the major contribution made by those different groups, there were individuals whose input was decisive. McCallum had the most difficult task of securing consensus and worked tirelessly to that end, not only by chairing the Council and presiding over some difficult discussions, but representing STEAC with one or more of the members of the Council in discussion with the UGC and other bodies. (57) He took the initiative on the SIT and it was he who

secured the compromise that kept the universities from going their separate way. Another key individual was Wilson. More than any other, he guided the process of the STEAC discussion and was senior enough to ensure that the activities of busy civil servants did not take priority over the provision of support for the Council. Then there were two members of the Council - Williams and Cuming - whose advocacy was one of the key features of the Council's deliberations. They were virtually in continuous disagreement but both defended their sectoral interest with fierce tenacity and conviction. The fact that Williams won - in the sense that he was able to persuade the Council to accept the conditions which were intended to protect the universities' position - should not be taken to mean that he had the better of the arguments. He did not: that honour went to Cuming. However, in seeking for the central institutions equivalence of funding and standing with the universities, Cuming was committed to a course that, given the power of the universities, was bound to be unsuccessful, as it was.

Finally, there were two individuals who should be given the credit for "saving" their respective colleges. Lord James Douglas-Hamilton, in whose constituency Dunfermline College lay, was tireless in defending the continued existence of the institution and, armed with endless papers from staff and students, vigorously and incessantly lobbied the Secretary of State, for whom he was Parliamentary Private Secretary. Indeed, even after the decision to merge with Moray House had been taken, he continued to lobby to secure the best possible deal for Dunfermline College, which he knew played a vital part in the life of the Cramond Community Association. And Peter McNaught, Principal of Craigie, who had experience of two previous defensive campaigns in 1977 and 1980 that had been successful, orchestrated with enormous skill a campaign that secured the involvement of a total community. Had Lord James and McNaught failed to campaign as they did the structure of teacher education following STEAC would have been radically different.

Of course, the advocacy that took place, the campaigning and the mobilisation of support to protect institutional and sectoral interests, entailed a clash of ideologies. The universities campaigned for quality: their thesis was that Scotland's universities would become second-rate and parochial institutions if they were cut off from the peer review system and research funding that held British universities together as a single academic community. Their appeal was to standards, standing and academic excellence. For their part, the central institutions fought for justice: they saw themselves as being acknowledged as successful institutions but felt themselves to be handicapped by a funding system that left them as wholly inadequate competitors with the universities. Equal funding for equal work had been their agreed slogan and their aim was to secure the kind of level playing-field that would bring that about. Finally, the colleges of education took their stand on educational grounds. They claimed that their success was attributable to their independence, which enabled them to establish strong links with their colleagues in the schools and to build the kind of partnerships so essential to effective teacher education. Repeatedly, the defenders of the college system maintained that the closure of colleges was a mere financial manoeuvre without any regard to educational considerations. For them, the closure of a successful educational institution was a kind of academic vandalism.

These principles - quality, equality and professional excellence - were forms of self-defence. Even the universities' campaign was strongly motivated by a desire to prevent the establishment of a common funding system for if that were introduced there would inevitably be a redistribution of funds in which the universities would certainly lose. Similarly, the central institutions and colleges of education vigorously defended a single funding mechanism, partly because that would result in increased efficiency of operation, but also because it would involve the kind of reallocation of funds by which they stood to gain. And the emphasis placed by the

colleges of education on professional collaboration was really an implicit plea for maintaining the monotechnic system.

The SED, too, had its ideological stances: it was strongly committed to the bureaucratic ideal of keeping public expenditure under control and felt that that could be achieved by more efficient institutional arrangements. It was also committed to control: the determination of Wilson to retain a publicly funded sector is interpretable as a way of defending SED territory. Finally, SED was strongly motivated by the prudentialist philosophy to protect the status quo. Fortunately for SED, two of the other contending groups were campaigning in the same direction: the universities wished to retain their established relationship with the UGC; and the colleges of education wished to retain their independence and to resist any closure. The fact that there was so much pressure for protecting the status quo explains why STEAC left Scottish higher education almost exactly as it had found it. That is, the SED had the power, but the opposition from the colleges and the universities conveniently made it unnecessary for the SED to have to use it.

Finally, with regard to the dimension of culture, Humes writes: "This is something that we are especially sensitive to in Scotland. Any hint that educational policies are an English imposition is deeply resented." (58) Humes interprets culture as a "mixture of tradition, identity and aspiration". (59) There is no doubt that at every stage of the STEAC process the cultural dimension asserted itself. That took several forms. First, it manifested itself in a remarkable affirmation of Scottishness: a range of bodies - such as the Advisory Council for the Arts in Scotland, the Heritage Society of Scotland, the Saltire Society, the Scottish History Society, and the Scottish Poetry Library Association - took advantage of the STEAC invitation to submit evidence and to respond to the report to bemoan the neglect of Scottish studies in schools and universities, and to insist that Scottish literature, history, the arts and Scottish social institutions should feature more

prominently in the school and university curriculum. Secondly, numerous bodies, including the SNP, took the opportunity to claim that the universities were integral parts of the Scottish educational tradition, and that they should be repatriated and removed from the control of an "anglicising quango" that was accountable to the DES. The central thrust of this line of argument, which is still advanced by commentators on the present scene such as Paterson, (60) is that, whether or not there is something special and distinctive about Scottish education, it ought to be the direct responsibility of people living and working in Scotland. The plea here is for self-determination and direct local accountability.

Interestingly, that appears to have been the view of James Scott, who was Secretary of SED at the time of STEAC. Now retired, he has broken the silence normally expected of civil servants and has admitted that he has been "a non-active member of the Scottish National Party for many years". (61) In his view, the basic problem preventing the repatriation of the universities at the time of STEAC was that "legislation and administration cannot be truly disengaged from the needs and aspirations of ministers in England". In the same article, Scott confirms that at the time of STEAC "the majority of principals thought that the heavens would be rend asunder if they were expelled from the cosy embrace of the University Grants Committee". James Scott intends to offer himself as a potential SNP candidate for the Scottish parliament.

Thirdly, numerous bodies maintained that it was simply inefficient to plan higher education in Scotland without involving the universities fully in that process. It was repeatedly argued that the fractured system of higher education in Scotland could not be made whole without the repatriation of the universities.

All three perspectives were found in a stirring series of leading articles extending over the years 1985 to 1991 in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*. The

editor urged the universities to repatriate and to assume their historic role in Scottish culture, maintaining that universities which were out of step with the march of a nation are likely to be marginalised. He wrote:

"University devolution is above all a political and cultural question - better still a national question. The present constitution of Britain is unlikely to be maintained for much longer. The arrogance of south Britain would be enough to overturn it, even with proud memories of Scotland's nationhood. It is no longer a question of if but when a parliament sits again in Edinburgh. Those who seek to limit the march of a nation, in Parnell's famous threat, risk being trodden on or, worse still, forgotten - even if they are among the nation's most ancient institutions." (62)

Why, then, did these arguments, laced with such vibrant rhetoric, fail to win the day? A combination of cultural and political influences ensured that repatriation was rejected. In the first place, the weight of university opinion was strongly against repatriation. That was by no means the unanimous mood. Many of the protagonists of Scottish life and letters were based in the universities; two of the principals - Alexander of Stirling and Hills of Strathclyde - strongly supported repatriation; while other university representatives vigorously defended the integration of the Scottish universities, none more so than Nigel Grant, Professor of Education at Glasgow, who extended his earlier critique of schools in *The Crisis of Scottish Education* to higher education. (63) Nevertheless, the overwhelming view of the powerful university constituency was in favour of maintaining UGC links. For some, it was important to reaffirm membership of a UK academic community in order to protect standards; for others, less motivated by high principle, it was essential to ensure continued access to funding from the research

councils and to perpetuate an arrangement which gave Scotland a disproportionate share of the available funds.

A further explanation of the impact of culture on the STEAC process has been offered by Walker. (64) In his view, the rejection of the repatriation option was due to the fact that the universities in Scotland had ceased to be Scottish: they had become so strongly colonised by students from south of the border that, for example, in St Andrews and Edinburgh, a majority of the students were not Scots. As though that were not enough, he maintained that "there is a large majority of English staff at all Scotland's universities, and sometimes there is a majority of English principals as well". (65) Given the extent of the penetration of Scotland's universities by non-Scots, it was, in Walker's view, no surprise that university opinion would be opposed to STEAC's central recommendation. (66) Walker's analysis has an ill-disguised xenophobic tone. Indeed, he suggests that "anglicisation" has reached the point when it should be put in reverse as part of "the revival of the democratic intellect". (67) He reserves a particular vehemence for his attack on Bell, finding it "frightening that an Englishman should ever have been appointed Editor of *Scottish Educational Studies*". (68)

Yet Bell offers an analysis which could explain the cultural significance of the rejection of the STEAC's principal recommendations. In a series of editorials, Bell argued that Scottish higher education had lost its distinctiveness, as "a function of Scottish integration into international life". (69) He remarked on "how deeply integrated English and Scottish educational thinking now is" (70); and he considered the authors of articles submitted to his journal as having "an academic's first loyalty to his discipline and its international profession, rather than to a country and its educational structures". (71) He also drew attention to the growth and importance of British institutions such as the Open University and the Council for National Academic Awards. Whether or not Bell was merely exercising his

editorial discretion to provoke contributions on an important theme - significantly, his case went unanswered - his analysis both influenced and gave expression to the reluctance of the universities to be devolved to a Scottish assembly in the mid-seventies. And that sense of belonging to a British rather than a purely Scottish tradition of scholarship surely influenced the universities' resistance to repatriation at the time of STEAC.

However, political influences also helped to shape that decision. Firstly, as Scott has argued, (72) in 1987 Kenneth Baker decided that his preferred way of "meeting the challenge" of higher education was to replace the UGC with the more directly accountable Universities' Funding Council and to establish a national body - the PCFC - to oversee the non-university institutions that were now to be independent of local authorities. The DES policy was clearly intended to reinforce the binary line and to place the two sectors in even sharper competition with each other. It is difficult to see how a unified higher education system in Scotland could have been agreed without undermining the government's determination to strengthen the binary line in England.

Secondly, Malcolm Rifkind was a member of the Conservative and Unionist government. While he himself in the '70s had been a strong supporter of devolution, (73) his position changed following the negative result of the 1979 referendum. His predisposition - and in this he was supported by political allies like Michael Forsyth and political opponents like Tam Dalziel - was to retain structures that reinforced the union rather than weakened it. (74) That political judgement took account of the fact that repatriation was unacceptable to the universities and to a majority of principals. In this instance, the ministerial decision was not the product of the "timorous unionism" of the SED, as Scott claims, (75) for it has been established that SED favoured repatriation: it was the manifestation

of a political philosophy exploiting the prevailing sense of identity in the universities.

Why was it necessary to overturn Rifkind's confident judgement within the space of four years in favour of repatriation and a unified system of higher education in Scotland? Again, the interplay of cultural and political factors provides the explanation. Firstly, the Conservative government became increasingly distrusted in Scotland and Michael Forsyth's "anglicising" initiatives in education, such as school boards, the 5-14 Programme, and national testing, generated remarkable hostility. The pursuit of such policies certainly strengthened devolutionary sentiment and ensured that repatriation, when it came, would be welcomed rather than resisted. Secondly, the sudden rejection of the binary system in 1989, and the merging of the UFC and the PCFC in England, forced SED and the Scottish universities to work out their own salvation: there was no solution other than repatriation. As in so many other areas of educational policy, the trigger for change in Scotland came from England.

Finally, the repatriation that was unacceptable in 1987 became acceptable in 1992 because it did not dissociate the Scottish universities from their counterparts in England. It is true that they were to fall under the aegis of a Scottish Higher Education Funding Council but several features of the new settlement perpetuated their Britishness. Thus, the Research Assessment Exercise would be undertaken on a UK basis; all institutions would have equal access to the research councils for funding; the Higher Education Quality Council would carry responsibility for quality assurance and quality control on a UK basis; and the new function of quality assessment, which would be a responsibility of each of the separate funding councils, statutorily had to be undertaken in such a way that the funding councils had to collaborate to ensure consistency of approach in the assessment of teaching. These changes, more than the three conditions stipulated by the STEAC, ensured

that the Scottish universities would be fully integrated into the Scottish educational system and fall under the ultimate control of the SED rather than a remote DES, while, at the same time, being subject to UK procedures intended to maintain UK-wide standards of teaching and research. In other words, the legislation of 1992 finally gave the universities all they had fought for: the conditions stipulated by the universities in the STEAC report were finally delivered. Better still, the safeguards were to be sanctioned by legislation.

If anything, the "British" features of higher education in Scotland have been strengthened since repatriation. As has been noted, separate arrangements were made for quality assessment north and south of the border. However, the review of quality assessment arrangements - significantly, separate exercises were conducted north and south of the border - seems destined to result, after sustained lobbying by the universities north and south of the border, and despite vigorous opposition by SHEFC, in a common approach to quality audit that will encompass quality assessment. (76)

As things now stand the four-year honours degree, which has long been recognised as one of the distinguishing features of Scottish higher education, remains the only obstacle to a truly British system. However, that degree is now under some threat. The introduction of an Advanced Higher in Scotland, the Garrick enthusiasm for a three-year general BA degree, the Dearing recommendation, accepted by the government, that students will be expected to pay tuition fees, will make the 4-year honours degree less and less attractive to potential students. As changes of that kind are introduced it will become more and more difficult to define a Scottish university by any other terms than that it is a university located in Scotland. The significance of that definition is two-fold: it will denote that the institution is a university, one that conforms to internationally accepted standards of teaching, research and scholarship; the term "located in Scotland" will testify that it is integral

to Scotland's educational system, that it is the responsibility of people living and working in Scotland, and that it is accountable to Scottish interests. That will mark the full realisation of STEAC's aspirations for higher education in Scotland.

Conclusions

The notion of the policy community remains a useful tool for analysing the policy process. On the evidence of STEAC the views of earlier commentators on the centrality of the Scottish Education Department has been reinforced. However, the analysis of the STEAC process suggests that certain adjustments may be required in our understanding of the operation of the policy community: there is clearly more than one single homogeneous policy community; membership of the policy community is not restricted to a relatively small number of high status figures occupying leadership roles; the operation of the policy community need not entail collusion with the government and is perfectly compatible with pluralism in policy-making; and, finally, policy communities are ultimately subservient to politicians, although they can have a powerful impact on policy decisions.

The notion of incrementalism is also a useful way of analysing the policy-making process. However, this study proposes that prudentialism may be a more appropriate concept. That is characterised by a cluster of attitudes: irrationality, the need to avoid political embarrassment, conservatism, an exaggerated regard for the status quo, a deep suspicion of new lines of action, and a determination to avoid decisions which have the effect of closing options.

Finally, the analysis of the STEAC process suggests that the Humes "revised" model offers a fruitful approach to policy-making studies, mainly because it can be applied to the analysis of any social phenomenon and offers the researcher rich opportunities for interpretation and justification. However, its very diffuseness indicates that it needs to be complemented by such perspectives as the policy

community as amended and prudentialism as proposed. In all of these ways, therefore, the analysis of the STEAC process, as well as offering the first definitive account of that important episode in the development of higher education policy in Scotland, contributes to the refinement of the techniques of analysing the policy-making process.

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27. Letter from Donald McCallum to Malcolm Rifkind, 2 April 1987
28. A version of the methodology, drawn from the Treasury publication "Economic Appraisal in Central Government - A technical guide for government departments" is reproduced as Annex B of *Merger Proposals from Scottish Higher Education Institutions*, Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, September 1994
29. The wording of the first criterion is as set out in the working paper used by the committee. In the drafting of the report, however, the wording was changed to read: "Any organisational innovation should not alter the distinctive vocational characteristics of the present non-university sector." STEAC Report, page 66
30. Scottish Education Department, *Future Strategy for Higher Education in Scotland*, (STEAC Report), HMSO, Edinburgh, 1985, page 67
31. Ibid, page 68
32. Ibid, page 67
33. Ibid, page 71
34. K Bloomer, "What now for sixth year?" in *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland*, 15 August 1997, page 12
35. *Higher Education in the Learning Society*, Report of the Scottish Committee, the National Committee of Enquiry into Higher Education, HMSO, Norwich, July 1997
36. Ibid, page 35

37. Scottish Education Department, *Future Strategy for Higher Education in Scotland*, (STEAC Report), HMSO, Edinburgh, 1985, page 5
38. "Good News from Scotland" in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 13 December 1985, page 28
39. *The Development of Higher Education into the 90s*, HMSO, London, May 1985
40. In its response to STEAC, RGIT had maintained that "STEAC failed to take advantage of its unique opportunity . . . In particular, in a strategic view, the question of whether the binary structure should remain, be modified, or be abolished, should have been a major theme . . ."
41. W B Marker, *The Spider's Web? Policy-making in teacher education in Scotland, 1959-1981*, Sales and Publications, University of Strathclyde, 1994, page 169
42. SED File JMJ/5/3, Part 1
43. Minute of meeting of STEAC on 6 September 1985, paragraph 8
44. SED File JMJ/5/1, Part 3
45. SED File JMJ/5/17, Part 1
46. Scottish Education Department, *Future Strategy for Higher Education in Scotland*, (STEAC Report), HMSO, Edinburgh, 1985, paragraph 6.20
47. Ibid, paragraph 6.8
48. Ibid, paragraph 6.12
49. Ibid, paragraph 6.18
50. Dr Tom Bone was quoted as saying, "Since Mr Rifkind has left the college situation very much as it was, I am only sorry he could not have left our facilities as they were." *The Scotsman*, 18 July 1986, page 6
51. *The Times Educational Supplement Scotland*, 3 April 1987, page 2
52. George Davie, *The Crisis of the Democratic Intellect*, Preface, Polygon Books, Edinburgh, 1986
53. Walter M Humes, "The Policy Process in Scottish Education: Towards a Revised Model" in *Education in the North*, New series, No 1, Winter 1993, pp 1-9
54. Walter M Humes, "Analysing the Policy Process" in *Scottish Educational Review*, Vol 29, No 1, May 1997, pp 20-29
55. Walter M Humes, "The Policy Process in Scottish Education: Towards a Revised Model" in *Education in the North*, New series, No 1, Winter 1993, page 8

56. Walter M Humes, "A Typology of Educational Reforms and Managerial Styles in Scotland" in *International Studies in Educational Administration*, Volume 25, No 1, 1997, pp 67-76
57. Towards the end of the Council Williams wrote a personal letter to McCallum congratulating him on his success in controlling the Council, "especially one so rich in prima donnas".
58. Ibid, page 68
59. Walter M Humes, "The Policy Process in Scottish Education: Towards a Revised Model" in *Education in the North*, New series, No 1, Winter 1993, page 6
60. Lindsay Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1994
61. Olga Wojtas, "Mandarin slams Scots' colonial status", *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 5 September 1997, page 5
62. "Ane Old Song" in *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 29 January 1988, page 36
63. Nigel Grant, *The Crisis of Scottish Education*, The Saltire Society, 1982
64. A L Walker, *The Revival of the Democratic Intellect*, Polygon, Edinburgh, 1994
65. Ibid, page 226
66. In support of Walker's conclusion the writer once asked a senior member of staff at St Andrews University how many of his colleagues were from south of the border and he replied that they were afraid to undertake the count. In the same context, in the discussions that are currently taking place between Moray House and the University of Edinburgh with a view to merger, it was significant that one of the arguments advanced by the University in favour of the merger was to create more opportunities for Scottish students.
67. A L Walker, *The Revival of the Democratic Intellect*, Polygon, Edinburgh, 1994, page 224. The anti-English tone is illustrated by such statements as, "It is absurd to have universities staffed by sad exiles, lagered-up in their campus compounds, wistfully hoping for that posting to Sussex."
68. Ibid, page 227
69. R E Bell, Editorial, *Scottish Educational Studies*, Vol 4, No 2, November 1972, page 72
70. R E Bell, Editorial, *Scottish Educational Studies*, Vol 5, No 2, November 1973, page 66
71. R E Bell, Editorial, *Scottish Educational Studies*, Vol 3, No 1, May 1971, page 2
72. Peter Scott, "Scottish Higher Education Regained: Accident or Design?" in *Scottish Affairs*, No 7, Spring 1994, page 75

73. Allan Massie, "A leap in the dark with a lot of goodwill" in *The Sunday Times*, 27 July 1997, page 14
74. Malcolm Rifkind, "Why I changed my mind on devolution", *Scotland on Sunday*, 31 August 1997, page 13
75. *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 21 October 1988, page 34
76. Discussion on COSHEP's Quality Assurance Committee, on which the author sits, has been dominated by this issue throughout session 1996/97.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

MEMBERSHIP OF THE SCOTTISH TERTIARY EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Chairman:

Mr DONALD M McCALLUM, CBE (Director, Ferranti plc)

Vice-Chairman:

Dr THOMAS R BONE (Principal of Jordanhill College of Education)

Members:

Mr T NORMAN BIGGART, CBE (Senior Partner, Biggart Baillie & Gifford WS)

Dr HENRY G CUMING, CBE (Principal of Dundee College of Technology)

Dr ETHEL M GRAY, CBE (formerly Principal of Craigie College of Education)

Mr AUBREY E HARPER (formerly Production and Technical Director of Nobel
Explosives Company)

Mr DUNCAN J MacLEOD (Partner, Ernst & Whinney, Chartered Accountants)

Mr ALLAN K SMITH, CBE (Managing Director, Production Division, Babcock
Power Limited)

Sir ALWYN WILLIAMS (Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Glasgow)

Observer from the University Grants Committee:

Professor BRIAN G GOWENLOCK (Professor of Chemistry, Heriot-Watt
University)

Assessors from the Scottish Education Department:

Mr IAN M WILSON, CB

Mr HUGH F SMITH (HM Depute Senior Chief Inspector of Schools)

Secretary:

Mr NORMAN MacLEOD

Assistant Secretary:

Mr BRENDAN J O'CONNOR

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE SCOTTISH TERTIARY
EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The terms of reference of STEAC, announced to parliament on 5 June 1984, were as follows:

"To consider and report on the future strategy for higher education in Scotland, including the arrangements for providing institutions with financial support and the general principles which should govern relationships between universities and other institutions; to advise the Secretary of State on such other matters as he may remit to the Council; and to collaborate as necessary with the University Grants Committee, the National Advisory Bodies for local authority higher education in England and Wales, the Manpower Services Commission and other appropriate bodies."

APPENDIX III

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS OF THE SCOTTISH TERTIARY EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting 1:	1 August 1984
Meeting 2:	28 September 1984
Meeting 3:	31 October 1984
Meeting 4:	30 November 1984
Meeting 5:	21 December 1984
Meeting 6:	18 January 1985
Meeting 7:	4 February 1985
Meeting 8:	18 February 1985
Meeting 9:	22/23 February 1985
Meeting 10:	8 March 1985
Meeting 11:	28 March 1985
Meeting 12:	12 April 1985
Meeting 13:	10 May 1985
Meeting 14:	7 June 1985
Meeting 15:	26 June 1985
Meeting 16:	12 July 1985
Meeting 17:	29 July 1985
Meeting 18:	12 August 1985
Meeting 19:	19 August 1985
Meeting 20:	26 August 1985
Meeting 21:	6 September 1985
Meeting 22:	30 September 1985
Meeting 23:	21 October 1985
Meeting 24:	31 October 1985
Meeting 25:	9 December 1985

CHRONOLOGY OF THE STEAC PROCESS

19 July 1983	George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland, presented to parliament his response to the Report of the Council for Tertiary Education in Scotland and intimated that he proposed to establish the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council "after the end of 1983" to advise him on "non-university tertiary education".
5 June 1984	George Younger intimated that the terms of reference of the Scottish Tertiary Education Advisory Council would be extended to cover "the general principles which should govern relationships between universities and other institutions". It was also announced that Donald McCallum would chair the new Council.
23 July 1984	Full membership of the Council announced.
1 August 1984	First meeting of STEAC.
16 October 1984	Closing date for submission of evidence.
9 December 1985	Publication of STEAC Report. George Younger intimates that there will be a period of consultation.
27 March 1986	Closing date for responses to the STEAC Report.
17 July 1986	Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of State for Scotland, announced his decision on the STEAC Report in the House of Commons. His statement covered colleges of education and central institutions. He intimated that further consultation was necessary with regard to the planning and funding of higher education in Scotland.
1 April 1987	Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of State for Scotland, intimated that he had rejected the STEAC recommendation of a planning and funding body for higher education in Scotland and that, instead, there would be established a Scottish Committee of the Universities Funding Council.

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